

The Bible, The Qur'an and Science

The Holy Scriptures Examined In The Light Of Modern Knowledge

by

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Translated from French
by

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**THIS BOOK CONTAINS 4 BOOKS & IT'S A 4IN1 BOOK. 1ST BOOK IS (THE QURAN
THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE) 2ND BOOK IS (THE TRUTH ABOUT MUHAMMAD AND JESUS)
3rd BOOK IS (The quran the final evidence they don't want you to know)& 4TH
BOOK IS (THE QUR'AAN AND MODERN SCIENCE COMPATIBLE OR
INCOMPATIBLE?)**

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Foreword

In his objective study of the texts, Maurice Bucaille clears away many preconceived ideas about the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Qur'an. He tries, in this collection of Writings, to separate what belongs to Revelation from what is the product of error or human interpretation. His study sheds new light on the Holy Scriptures. At the end of a gripping account, he places the Believer before a point of cardinal importance: the continuity of a Revelation emanating from the same God, with modes of expression that differ in the course of time. It leads us to meditate upon those factors which, in our day, should spiritually unite rather than divide-Jews, Christians and Muslims.

As a surgeon, Maurice Bucaille has often been in a situation where he was able to examine not only people's bodies, but their souls. This is how he was struck by the existence of Muslim piety and by aspects of Islam which remain unknown to the vast majority of non-Muslims. In his search for explanations which are otherwise difficult to obtain, he learnt Arabic and studied the Qur'an. In it, he was surprised to find statements on natural phenomena whose meaning can only be understood through modern scientific knowledge.

He then turned to the question of the authenticity of the writings that constitute the Holy Scriptures of the monotheistic religions. Finally, in the case of the Bible, he proceeded to a confrontation between these writings and scientific data.

The results of his research into the Judeo-Christian Revelation and the Qur'an are set out in this book.

Introduction

Each of the three monotheistic religions possess its own collection of Scriptures. For the faithful-be they Jews, Christians or Muslims-these documents constitute the foundation of their belief. For them they are the material transcription of a divine Revelation; directly, as in the case of Abraham and Moses, who received the commandments from God Himself, or indirectly, as in the case of Jesus and Muhammad, the first of whom stated that he was speaking in the name of the Father, and the second of whom transmitted to men the Revelation imparted to him by Archangel Gabriel.

If we take into consideration the objective facts of religious history, we must place the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Qur'an on the same level as being collections of written Revelation. Although this attitude is in principle held by Muslims, the faithful in the West under the predominantly Judeo-Christian influence refuse to ascribe to the Qur'an the character of a book of Revelation.

Such an attitude may be explained by the position each religious community adopts towards the other two with regard to the Scriptures.

Judaism has as its holy book the Hebraic Bible. This differs from the Old Testament of the Christians in that the latter have included several books which did not exist in Hebrew. In practice, this divergence hardly makes any difference to the doctrine. Judaism does not however admit any revelation subsequent to its own.

Christianity has taken the Hebraic Bible for itself and added a few supplements to it. It has not however accepted all the published writings destined to make known to men the Mission of Jesus. The Church has made incisive cuts in the profusion of books relating the life and teachings of Jesus. It has only preserved a limited number of writings in the New Testament, the most important of which are the four Canonic Gospels. Christianity takes no account of any revelation subsequent to Jesus and his Apostles. It therefore rules out the Qur'an.

The Qur'anic Revelation appeared six centuries after Jesus. It resumes numerous data found in the Hebraic Bible and the Gospels since it quotes very frequently from the 'Torah'[1] and the 'Gospels.' The Qur'an directs all Muslims to believe in the Scriptures that precede it (sura 4, verse 136). It stresses the important position occupied in the Revelation by God's emissaries, such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Prophets and Jesus, to whom they allocate a special position. His birth is described in the Qur'an, and likewise in the Gospels, as a supernatural event. Mary is also given a special place, as indicated by the fact that sura 19 bears her name.

The above facts concerning Islam are not generally known in the West. This is hardly surprising, when we consider the way so many generations in the West were instructed in the religious problems facing humanity and the ignorance in which they were kept about anything related to Islam. The use of such terms as 'Mohammedan religion' and 'Mohammedans' has been instrumental-even to the present day-in maintaining the false notion that beliefs were involved that were spread by the work of man among which God (in the Christian sense) had no place. Many cultivated people today are interested in the philosophical, social and political aspects of Islam, but they do not pause to inquire about the Islamic Revelation itself, as indeed they should.

In what contempt the Muslims are held by certain Christian circles! I experienced this when I tried to start an exchange of ideas arising from a comparative analysis of Biblical and Qur'anic stories on the same theme. I noted a systematic refusal, even for the purposes of simple reflection, to take any account of what the Qur'an had to say on the subject in hand. It is as if a quote from the Qur'an were a reference to the Devil!

A noticeable change seems however to be under way these days at the highest levels of the Christian world. The Office for Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican has produced a document result. from the Second Vatican Council under the French title *Orientations pour un dialogue entre Chrétiens et Musulmans*[2]

(Orientations for a Dialogue between Christians and Muslims), third French edition dated 1970, which bears witness to the profound change in official attitude. Once the document has invited the reader to clear away the "out-dated image, inherited from the past, or distorted by prejudice

and slander" that Christians have of Islam, the Vatican document proceeds to "recognize the past injustice towards the Muslims for which the West, with its Christian education, is to blame". It also criticizes the misconceptions Christians have been under concerning Muslim fatalism, Islamic legalism, fanaticism, etc. It stresses belief in unity of God and reminds us how surprised the audience was at the Muslim University of Al Azhar, Cairo, when Cardinal Koenig proclaimed this unity at the Great Mosque during an official conference in March, 1969. It reminds us also that the Vatican Office in 1967 invited Christians to offer their best wishes to Muslims at the end of the Fast of Ramadan with "genuine religious worth".

Such preliminary steps towards a closer relationship between the Roman Catholic Curia and Islam have been followed by various manifestations and consolidated by encounters between the two. There has been, however, little publicity accorded to events of such great importance in the western world, where they took place and where there are ample means of communication in the form of press, radio and television.

The newspapers gave little coverage to the official visit of Cardinal Pignedoli, the President of the Vatican Office of Non-Christian Affairs, on 24th April, 1974, to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. The French newspaper *Le Monde* on 25th April, 1974, dealt with it in a few lines. What momentous news they contain, however, when we read how the Cardinal conveyed to the Sovereign a message from Pope Paul VI expressing "the regards of His Holiness, moved by a profound belief in the unification of Islamic and Christian worlds in the worship of a single God, to His Majesty King Faisal as supreme head of the Islamic world". Six months later, in October 1974, the Pope received the official visit to the Vatican of the Grand Ulema of Saudi Arabia. It occasioned a dialogue between Christians and Muslims on the "Cultural Rights of Man in Islam". The Vatican newspaper, *Observatore Romano*, on 26th October, 1974, reported this historic event in a front page story that took up more space than the report on the closing day of the meeting held by the Synod of Bishops in Rome.

The Grand Ulema of Saudi Arabia were afterwards received by the Ecumenical Council of Churches of Geneva and by the Lord Bishop of Strasbourg, His Grace Elchinger. The Bishop invited them to join in midday prayer before him in his cathedral. The fact that the event was reported seems to be more on account of its unusual nature than because of its considerable religious significance. At all events, among those whom I questioned about this religious manifestation, there were very few who replied that they were aware of it.

The open-minded attitude Pope Paul VI has towards Islam will certainly become a milestone in the relations between the two religions. He himself said that he was "moved by a profound belief in the unification of the Islamic and Christian worlds in the worship of a single God". This reminder of the sentiments of the head of the Catholic Church concerning Muslims is indeed necessary. Far too many Christians, brought up in a spirit of open hostility, are against any reflection about Islam on principle. The Vatican document notes this with regret. It is on account of this that they remain totally ignorant of what Islam is in reality, and retain notions about the Islamic Revelation which are entirely mistaken.

Nevertheless, when studying an aspect of the Revelation of a monotheistic religion, it seems quite in order to compare what the other two have to say on the same subject. A comprehensive

study of a problem is more interesting than a compartmentalized one. The confrontation between certain subjects dealt with in the Scriptures and the facts of 20th century science will therefore, in this work, include all three religions. In addition it will be useful to realize that the three religions should form a tighter block by virtue of their closer relationship at a time when they are all threatened by the onslaught of materialism. The notion that science and religion are incompatible is as equally prevalent in countries under the Judeo-Christian influence as in the world of Islam-especially in scientific circles. If this question were to be dealt with comprehensively, a series of lengthy exposes would be necessary. In this work, I intend to tackle only one aspect of it: the examination of the Scriptures themselves in the light of modern scientific knowledge.

Before proceeding with our task, we must ask a fundamental question: How authentic are today's texts? It is a question which entails an examination of the circumstances surrounding their composition and the way in which they have come down to us.

In the West the critical study of the Scriptures is something quite recent. For hundreds of years people were content to accept the Bible-both Old and New Testaments-as it was. A reading produced nothing more than remarks vindicating it. It would have been a sin to level the slightest criticism at it. The clergy were privileged in that they were easily able to have a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, while the majority of laymen heard only selected readings as part of a sermon or the liturgy.

Raised to the level of a specialized study, textual criticism has been valuable in uncovering and disseminating problems which are often very serious. How disappointing it is therefore to read works of a so-called critical nature which, when faced with very real problems of interpretation, merely provide passages of an apologetical nature by means of which the author contrives to hide his dilemma. Whoever retains his objective judgment and power of thought at such a moment will not find the improbabilities and contradictions any the less persistent. One can only regret an attitude which, in the face of all logical reason, upholds certain passages in the Biblical Scriptures even though they are riddled with errors. It can exercise an extremely damaging influence upon the cultivated mind with regard to belief in God. Experience shows however that even if the few are able to distinguish fallacies of this kind, the vast majority of Christians have never taken any account of such incompatibilities with their secular knowledge, even though they are often very elementary.

Islam has something relatively comparable to the Gospels in some of the Hadiths. These are the collected sayings of Muhammad and stories of his deeds. The Gospels are nothing other than this for Jesus. Some of the collections of Hadiths were written decades after the death of Muhammad, just as the Gospels were written decades after Jesus. In both cases they bear human witness to events in the past. We shall see how, contrary to what many people think, the authors of the four Canonic Gospels were not the witnesses of the events they relate. The same is true of the Hadiths referred to at the end of this book.

Here the comparison must end because even if the authenticity of such-and-such a Hadith has been discussed and is still under discussion, in the early centuries of the Church the problem of the vast number of Gospels was definitively decided. Only four of them were proclaimed

official, or canonic, in spite of the many points on which they do not agree, and order was given for the rest to be concealed; hence the term 'Apocrypha'.

Another fundamental difference in the Scriptures of Christianity and Islam is the fact that Christianity does not have a text which is both revealed and written down. Islam, however, has the Qur'an which fits this description.

The Qur'an is the expression of the Revelation made to Muhammad by the Archangel Gabriel, which was immediately taken down, and was memorized and recited by the faithful in their prayers, especially during the month of Ramadan. Muhammad himself arranged it into suras, and these were collected soon after the death of the Prophet, to form, under the rule of Caliph Uthman (12 to 24 years after the Prophet's death), the text we know today.

In contrast to this, the Christian Revelation is based on numerous indirect human accounts. We do not in fact have an eyewitness account from the life of Jesus, contrary to what many Christians imagine. The question of the authenticity of the Christian and Islamic texts has thus now been formulated.

The confrontation between the texts of the Scriptures and scientific data has always provided man with food for thought.

It was at first held that corroboration between the scriptures and science was a necessary element to the authenticity of the sacred text. Saint Augustine, in letter No. 82, which we shall quote later on, formally established this principle. As science progressed however it became clear that there were discrepancies between Biblical Scripture and science. It was therefore decided that comparison would no longer be made. Thus a situation arose which today, we are forced to admit, puts Biblical exegetes and scientists in opposition to one another. We cannot, after all, accept a divine Revelation making statements which are totally inaccurate. There was only one way of logically reconciling the two; it lay in not considering a passage containing unacceptable scientific data to be genuine. This solution was not adopted. Instead, the integrity of the text was stubbornly maintained and experts were obliged to adopt a position on the truth of the Biblical Scriptures which, for the scientist, is hardly tenable.

Like Saint Augustine for the Bible, Islam has always assumed that the data contained in the Holy Scriptures were in agreement with scientific fact. A modern examination of the Islamic Revelation has not caused a change in this position. As we shall see later on, the Qur'an deals with many subjects of interest to science, far more in fact than the Bible. There is no comparison between the limited number of Biblical statements which lead to a confrontation With science, and the profusion of subjects mentioned in the Qur'an that are of a scientific nature. None of the latter can be contested from a scientific point of view. this is the basic fact that emerges from our study. We shall see at the end of this work that such is not the case for the Hadiths. These are collections of the Prophet's sayings, set aside from the Qur'anic Revelation, certain of which are scientifically unacceptable. The Hadiths in question have been under study in accordance with the strict principles of the Qur'an which dictate that science and reason should always be referred to, if necessary to deprive them of any authenticity.

These reflections on the scientifically acceptable or unacceptable nature of a certain Scripture need some explanation. It must be stressed that when scientific data are discussed here, what is meant is data definitely established. This consideration rules out any explanatory theories, once useful in illuminating a phenomenon and easily dispensed with to make way for further explanations more in keeping with scientific progress. What I intend to consider here are incontrovertible facts and even if science can only provide incomplete data, they will nevertheless be sufficiently well established to be used Without fear of error.

Scientists do not, for example, have even an approximate date for man's appearance on Earth. They have however discovered remains of human works which we can situate beyond a shadow of a doubt at before the tenth millenium B.C. Hence we cannot consider the Biblical reality on this subject to be compatible with science. In the Biblical text of Genesis, the dates and genealogies given would place man's origins (i.e. the creation of Adam) at roughly thirty-seven centuries B.C. In the future, science may be able to provide us with data that are more precise than our present calculations, but we may rest assured that it will never tell us that man first appeared on Earth 6,786 years ago, as does the Hebraic calendar for 1976. The Biblical data concerning the antiquity of man are therefore inaccurate.

This confrontation with science excludes all religious problems in the true sense of the word. Science does not, for example, have any explanation of the process whereby God manifested Himself to Moses. The same may be said for the mystery surrounding the manner in which Jesus was born in the absence of a biological father. The Scriptures moreover give no material explanation of such data. This present study is concerned With what the Scriptures tell us about extremely varied natural phenomena, which they surround to a lesser or greater extent with commentaries and explanations. With this in mind, we must note the contrast between the rich abundance of information on a given subject in the Qur'anic Revelation and the modesty of the other two revelations on the same subject.

It was in a totally objective spirit, and without any preconceived ideas that I first examined the Qur'anic Revelation. I was looking for the degree of compatibility between the Qur'anic text and the data of modern science. I knew from translations that the Qur'an often made allusion to all sorts of natural phenomena, but I had only a summary knowledge of it. It was only when I examined the text very closely in Arabic that I kept a list of them at the end of which I had to acknowledge the evidence in front of me: the Qur'an did not contain a single statement that was assailable from a modern scientific point of view.

I repeated the same test for the Old Testament and the Gospels, always preserving the same objective outlook. In the former I did not even have to go beyond the first book, Genesis, to find statements totally out of keeping With the cast-iron facts of modern science.

On opening the Gospels, one is immediately confronted with a serious problem. On the first page we find the genealogy of Jesus, but Matthew's text is in evident contradiction to Luke's on the same question. There is a further problem in that the latter's data on the antiquity of man on Earth are incompatible with modern knowledge.

The existence of these contradictions, improbabilities and incompatibilities does not seem to me to detract from the belief in God. They involve only man's responsibility. No one can say what the original texts might have been, or identify imaginative editing, deliberate manipulations of them by men, or unintentional modification of the Scriptures. What strikes us today, when we realize Biblical contradictions and incompatibilities with well-established scientific data, is how specialists studying the texts either pretend to be unaware of them, or else draw attention to these defects then try to camouflage them with dialectic acrobatics. When we come to the Gospels according to Matthew and John, I shall provide examples of this brilliant use of apologetical turns of phrase by eminent experts in exegesis. Often the attempt to camouflage an improbability or a contradiction, prudishly called a 'difficulty', is successful. This explains why so many Christians are unaware of the serious defects contained in the Old Testament and the Gospels. The reader will find precise examples of these in the first and second parts of this work.

In the third part, there is the illustration of an unusual application of science to a holy Scripture, the contribution of modern secular knowledge to a better understanding of certain verses in the Qur'an which until now have remained enigmatic, if not incomprehensible. Why should we be surprised at this when we know that, for Islam, religion and science have always been considered twin sisters? From the very beginning, Islam directed people to cultivate science; the application of this precept brought with it the prodigious strides in science taken during the great era of Islamic civilization, from which, before the Renaissance, the West itself benefited. In the confrontation between the Scriptures and science a high point of understanding has been reached owing to the light thrown on Qur'anic passages by modern scientific knowledge. Previously these passages were obscure owing to the non-availability of knowledge which could help interpret them.

The Old Testament

General Outlines

Who is the author of the Old Testament?

One wonders how many readers of the Old Testament, if asked the above question, would reply by repeating what they had read in the introduction to their Bible. They might answer that, even though it was written by men inspired by the Holy Ghost, the author was God.

Sometimes, the author of the Bible's presentation confines himself to informing his reader of this succinct observation which puts an end to all further questions. Sometimes he corrects it by warning him that details may subsequently have been added to the primitive text by men, but that nonetheless, the litigious character of a passage does not alter the general 'truth' that proceeds from it. This 'truth' is stressed very heavily. The Church Authorities answer for it, being the only body, With the assistance of the Holy Ghost, able to enlighten the faithful on such points. Since the Councils held in the Fourth century, it was the Church that issued the list of Holy Books, ratified by the Councils of Florence (1441), Trent (1546), and the First Vatican Council (1870),

to form what today is known as the Canon. Just recently, after so many encyclicals, the Second Vatican Council published a text concerning the Revelation which is extremely important. It took three years (1962-1966) of strenuous effort to produce. The vast majority of the Bible's readers who find this highly reassuring information at the head of a modern edition have been quite satisfied with the guarantees of authenticity made over past centuries and have hardly thought it possible to debate them.

When one refers however to works written by clergymen, not meant for mass publication, one realizes that the question concerning the authenticity of the books in the Bible is much more complex than one might suppose *a priori*. For example, when one consults the modern publication in separate installments of the Bible in French translated under the guidance of the Biblical School of Jerusalem[3], the tone appears to be very different. One realizes that the Old Testament, like the New Testament, raises problems with controversial elements that, for the most part, the authors of commentaries have not concealed.

We also find highly precise data in more condensed studies of a very objective nature, such as Professor Edmond Jacob's study. *The Old Testament* (L'Ancien Testament)[4]. This book gives an excellent general view.

Many people are unaware, and Edmond Jacob points this out, that there were originally a number of texts and not just one. Around the Third century B.C., there were at least three forms of the Hebrew text: the text which was to become the Masoretic text, the text which was used, in part at least, for the Greek translation, and the Samaritan Pentateuch. In the First century B.C., there was a tendency towards the establishment of a single text, but it was not until a century after Christ that the Biblical text was definitely established.

If we had had the three forms of the text, comparison would have been possible, and we could have reached an opinion concerning what the original might have been. Unfortunately, we do not have the slightest idea. Apart from the Dead Sea Scrolls (Cave of Qumran) dating from a pre-Christian era near the time of Jesus, a papyrus of the Ten Commandments of the Second century A.D. presenting variations from the classical text, and a few fragments from the Fifth century A.D. (Geniza of Cairo), the oldest Hebrew text of the Bible dates from the Ninth century A.D.

The Septuagint was probably the first translation in Greek. It dates from the Third century B.C. and was written by Jews in Alexandria. It was on this text that the New Testament was based. It remained authoritative until the Seventh century A.D. The basic Greek texts in general use in the Christian world are from the manuscripts catalogued under the title Codex Vaticanus in the Vatican City and *Codex Sinaiticus* at the British Museum, London. They date from the Fourth century A.D.

At the beginning of the Fifth century A.D., Saint Jerome was able to produce a text in Latin using Hebrew documents. It was later to be called the *Vulgate* on account of its universal distribution after the Seventh century A.D.

For the record, we shall mention the Aramaic version and the Syriac (Peshitta) version, but these are incomplete.

All of these versions have enabled specialists to piece together so-called 'middle-of-the-road' texts, a sort of compromise between the different versions. Multi-lingual collections have also been produced which juxtapose the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Aramaic and even Arabic versions. This is the case of the famous Walton Bible (London, 1667). For the sake of completeness, let us mention that diverging Biblical conceptions are responsible for the fact that the various Christian churches do not all accept exactly the same books and have not until now had identical ideas on translation into the same language. *The Ecumenical Translation of the Old Testament* is a work of unification written by numerous Catholic and Protestant experts now nearing completion[5] and should result in a work of synthesis.

Thus the human element in the Old Testament is seen to be quite considerable. It is not difficult to understand why from version to version, and translation to translation, with all the corrections inevitably resulting, it was possible for the original text to have been transformed during the course of more than two thousand years.

ORIGINS OF THE BIBLE

Before it became a collection of books, it was a folk tradition that relied entirely upon human memory, originally the only means of passing on ideas. This tradition was sung.

"At an elementary stage, writes E. Jacob, every people sings; in Israel, as elsewhere, poetry preceded prose. Israel sang long and well; led by circumstances of his history to the heights of joy and the depths of despair, taking part with intense feeling in all that happened to it, for everything in their eyes had a sense, Israel gave its song a wide variety of expression". They sang for the most diverse reasons and E. Jacob mentions a number of them to which we find the accompanying songs in the Bible: eating songs, harvest songs, songs connected with work, like the famous Well Song (Numbers 21, 17), wedding songs, as in the Song of Songs, and mourning songs. In the Bible there are numerous songs of war and among these we find the Song of Deborah (Judges 5, 1-32) exalting Israel's victory desired and led by Yahweh Himself, (Numbers 10, 35); "And whenever the ark (of alliance) set out, Moses said, 'Arise, oh Yahweh, and let thy enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee'".

There are also the Maxims and Proverbs (Book of Proverbs, Proverbs and Maxims of the Historic Books), words of blessing and curse, and the laws decreed to man by the Prophets on reception of their Divine mandate.

E. Jacobs notes that these words were either passed down from family to family or channelled through the sanctuaries in the form of an account of the history of God's chosen people. History quickly turned into fable, as in the Fable of Jotham (Judges 9, 7-21), where "the trees went forth to anoint a king over them; and they asked in turn the olive tree, the fig tree, the vine and the bramble", which allows E. Jacob to note "animated by the need to tell a good story, the narration was not perturbed by subjects or times whose history was not well known", from which he concludes:

"It is probable that what the Old Testament narrates about Moses and the patriarchs only roughly corresponds to the succession of historic facts. The narrators however, even at the stage of oral transmission, were able to bring into play such grace and imagination to blend between them highly varied episodes, that when all is said and done, they were able to present as a history that was fairly credible to critical thinkers what happened at the beginning of humanity and the world".

There is good reason to believe that after the Jewish people settled in Canaan, at the end of the Thirteenth century B.C., writing was used to preserve and hand down the tradition. There was not however complete accuracy, even in what to men seems to demand the greatest durability, i.e. the laws. Among these, the laws which are supposed to have been written by God's own hand, the Ten Commandments, were transmitted in the Old Testament in two versions; Exodus (20,1-21) and Deuteronomy (5, 1-30). They are the same in spirit, but the variations are obvious. There is also a concern to keep a large written record of contracts, letters, lists of personalities (Judges, high city officials, genealogical tables), lists of offerings and plunder. In this way, archives were created which provided documentation for the later editing of definitive works resulting in the books we have today. Thus in each book there is a mixture of different literary genres: it can be left to the specialists to find the reasons for this odd assortment of documents.

The Old Testament is a disparate whole based upon an initially oral tradition. It is interesting therefore to compare the process by which it was constituted with what could happen in another period and another place at the time when a primitive literature was born.

Let us take, for example, the birth of French literature at the time of the Frankish Royalty. The same oral tradition presided over the preservation of important deeds: wars, often in the defense of Christianity, various sensational events, where heroes distinguished themselves, that were destined centuries later to inspire court poets, chroniclers and authors of various 'cycles'. In this way, from the Eleventh century A.D. onwards, these narrative poems, in which reality is mixed with legend, were to appear and constitute the first monument in epic poetry. The most famous of all is *the Song of Roland* (La Chanson de Roland) a biographical chant about a feat of arms in which Roland was the commander of Emperor Charlemagne's rearguard on its way home from an expedition in Spain. The sacrifice of Roland is not just an episode invented to meet the needs of the story. It took place on 15th August, 778. In actual fact it was an attack by Basques living in the mountains. This literary work is not just legend ; it has a historical basis, but no historian would take it literally.

This parallel between the birth of the Bible and a secular literature seems to correspond exactly with reality. It is in no way meant to relegate the whole Biblical text as we know it today to the store of mythological collections, as do so many of those who systematically negate the idea of God. It is perfectly possible to believe in the reality of the Creation, God's transmission to Moses of the Ten Commandments, Divine intercession in human affairs, e.g. at the time of Solomon. This does not stop us, at the same time, from considering that what has been conveyed to us is the gist of these facts, and that the detail in the description should be subjected to rigorous criticism, the reason for this being that the element of human participation in the transcription of originally oral traditions is so great

The Books of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is a collection of works of greatly differing length and many different genres. They were written in several languages over a period of more than nine hundred years, based on oral traditions. Many of these works were corrected and completed in accordance with events or special requirements, often at periods that were very distant from one another.

This copious literature probably flowered at the beginning of the Israelite Monarchy, around the Eleventh century B.C. It was at this period that a body of scribes appeared among the members of the royal household. They were cultivated men whose role was not limited to writing. The first incomplete writings, mentioned in the preceding chapter, may date from this period. There was a special reason for writing these works down; there were a certain number of songs (mentioned earlier), the prophetic oracles of Jacob and Moses, the Ten Commandments and, on a more general level, the legislative texts which established a religious tradition before the formation of the law. All these texts constitute fragments scattered here and there throughout the various collections of the Old Testament.

It was not until a little later, possibly during the Tenth century B.C., that the so-called 'Yahvist'[6] text of the Pentateuch was written. This text was to form the backbone of the first five books ascribed to Moses. Later, the so-called 'Elohists'[7] text was to be added, and also the so-called 'Sacerdotal'[8] version. The initial Yahvist text deals with the origins of the world up to the death of Jacob. This text comes from the southern kingdom, Judah.

At the end of the Ninth century and in the middle of the Eighth century B.C., the prophetic influence of Elias and Elisha took shape and spread. We have their books today. This is also the time of the Elohist text of the Pentateuch which covers a much smaller period than the Yahvist text because it limits itself to facts relating to Abraham, Jacob and Joseph. The books of Joshua and Judges date from this time.

The Eighth century B.C. saw the appearance of the writer-prophets: Amos and Hosea in Israel, and Michah in Judah.

In 721 B.C., the fall of Samaria put an end to the Kingdom of Israel. The Kingdom of Judah took over its religious heritage. The collection of Proverbs dates from this period, distinguished in particular by the fusion into a single book of the Yahvist and Elohist texts of the Pentateuch; in this way the Torah was constituted. Deuteronomy was written at this time.

In the second half of the Seventh century B.C., the reign of Josiah coincided with the appearance of the prophet Jeremiah, but his work did not take definitive shape until a century later.

Before the first deportation to Babylon in 598 B.C., there appeared the Books of Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk. Ezekiel was already prophesying during this first deportation. The fall of

Jerusalem in 587 B.C. marked the beginning of the second deportation which lasted until 538 B.C.

The Book of Ezekiel, the last great prophet and the prophet of exile, was not arranged into its present form until after his death by the scribes that were to become his spiritual inheritors. These same scribes were to resume Genesis in a third version, the so-called 'Sacerdotal' version, for the section going from the Creation to the death of Jacob. In this way a third text was to be inserted into the central fabric of the Yahvist and Elohist texts of the Torah. We shall see later on, in the books written roughly two and four centuries earlier, an aspect of the intricacies of this third text. It was at this time that the Lamentations appeared.

On the order of Cyrus, the deportation to Babylon came to an end in 538 B.C. The Jews returned to Palestine and the Temple at Jerusalem was rebuilt. The prophets' activities began again, resulting in the books of Haggai, Zechariah, the third book of Isaiah, Malachi, Daniel and Baruch (the last being in Greek). The period following the deportation is also the period of the Books of Wisdom: Proverbs was written definitively around 480 B.C., Job in the middle of the Fifth century B.C., Ecclesiastes or Koheleth dates from the Third century B.C., as do the Song of Songs, Chronicles I & II, Ezra and Nehemiah; Ecclesiasticus or Sirach appeared in the Second century B.C.; the Book of Wisdom and the Book of Maccabees I & II were written one century before Christ. The Books of Ruth, Esther and Jonah are not easily datable. The same is true for Tobit and Judith. All these dates are given on the understanding that there may have been subsequent adaptations, since it was only circa one century before Christ that form was first given to the writings of the Old Testament. For many this did not become definitive until one century after Christ.

Thus the Old Testament appears as a literary monument to the Jewish people, from its origins to the coming of Christianity. The books it consists of were written, completed and revised between the Tenth and the First centuries B.C. This is in no way a personal point of view on the history of its composition. The essential data for this historical survey were taken from the entry *The Bible* in the Encyclopedia Universalis[9] by J. P. Sandroz, a professor at the Dominican Faculties, Saulchoir. To understand what the Old Testament represents, it is important to retain this information, correctly established today by highly qualified specialists.

A Revelation is mingled in all these writings, but all we possess today is what men have seen fit to leave us. These men manipulated the texts to please themselves, according to the circumstances they were in and the necessities they had to meet.

When these objective data are compared with those found in various prefaces to Bibles destined today for mass publication, one realizes that facts are presented in them in quite a different way. Fundamental facts concerning the writing of the books are passed over in silence, ambiguities which mislead the reader are maintained, facts are minimalised to such an extent that a false idea of reality is conveyed. A large number of prefaces or introductions to the Bible misrepresent reality in this way. In the case of books that were adapted several times (like the Pentateuch), it is said that certain details may have been added later on. A discussion of an unimportant passage of a book is introduced, but crucial facts warranting lengthy expositions are passed over in silence. It is distressing to see such inaccurate information on the Bible maintained for mass publication.

THE TORAH OR PENTATEUCH

Torah is the Semitic name.

The Greek expression, which in English gives us 'Pentateuch', designates a work in five parts; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These were to form the five primary elements of the collection of thirty-nine volumes that makes up the Old Testament.

This group of texts deals with the origins of the world up to the entry of the Jewish people into Canaan, the land promised to them after their exile in Egypt, more precisely until the death of Moses. The narration of these facts serves however as a general framework for a description of the provisions made for the religious and social life of the Jewish people, hence the name Law or Torah.

Judaism and Christianity for many centuries considered that the author was Moses himself. Perhaps this affirmation was based on the fact that God said to Moses (Exodus 17, 14): "Write this (the defeat of Amalek) as a memorial in a book", or again, talking of the Exodus from Egypt, "Moses wrote down their starting places" (Numbers 33, 2), and finally "And Moses wrote this law" (Deuteronomy 31, 9). From the First century B.C. onwards, the theory that Moses wrote the Pentateuch was upheld; Flavius Josephus and Philo of Alexandria maintain it.

Today, this theory has been completely abandoned; everybody is in agreement on this point. The New Testament nevertheless ascribes the authorship to Moses. Paul, in his Letter to the Romans (10, 5) quoting from Leviticus, affirms that "Moses writes that the man who practices righteousness which is based on the law . . ." etc. John, in his Gospel (5,46-47), makes Jesus say the following: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" We have here an example of editing, because the Greek word that corresponds to the original (written in Greek) is *episteuete*, so that the Evangelist is putting an affirmation into Jesus's mouth that is totally wrong: the following demonstrates this.

I am borrowing the elements of this demonstration from Father de Vaux, Head of the Biblical School of Jerusalem. He prefaced his French translation of Genesis in 1962 with a General Introduction to the Pentateuch which contained valuable arguments. These ran contrary to the affirmations of the Evangelists on the authorship of the work in question. Father de Vaux reminds us that the "Jewish tradition which was followed by Christ and his Apostles" was accepted up to the end of the Middle Ages. The only person to contest this theory was Abenezra in the Twelfth century. It was in the Sixteenth century that Calstadt noted that Moses could not have written the account of his own death in Deuteronomy (34, 5-12). The author then quotes other critics who refuse to ascribe to Moses a part, at least, of the Pentateuch. It was above all the work of Richard Simon, father of the Oratory, *Critical History of the Old Testament* (*Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*) 1678, that underlined the chronological difficulties, the repetitions, the confusion of the stories and stylistic differences in the Pentateuch. The book caused a scandal. R. Simon's line of argument was barely followed in history books at the beginning of the Eighteenth century. At this time, the references to antiquity very often proceeded from what "Moses had written".

One can easily imagine how difficult it was to combat a legend strengthened by Jesus himself who, as we have seen, supported it in the New Testament. It is to Jean Astruc, Louis XV's doctor, that we owe the decisive argument.

By publishing, in 1753, *his Conjectures on the original writings which it appears Moses used to compose the Book of Genesis* (Conjectures sur les Mèmoires originaux dont il parait que Moyse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse), he placed the accent on the plurality of sources. He was probably not the first to have noticed it, but he did however have the courage to make public an observation of prime importance: two texts, each denoted by the way in which God was named either Yahweh or Elohim, were present side by side in Genesis. The latter therefore contained two juxtaposed texts. Eichorn (1780-1783) made the same discovery for the other four books; then Ilgen (1798) noticed that one of the texts isolated by Astruc, the one where God is named Elohim, was itself divided into two. The Pentateuch literally fell apart.

The Nineteenth century saw an even more minute search into the sources. In 1854, four sources were recognised. They were called the Yahvist version, the Elohist version, Deuteronomy, and the Sacerdotal version. It was even possible to date them:

- 1) The Yahvist version was placed in the Ninth century B.C. (written in Judah)
- 2) The Elohist version was probably a little more recent (written in Israel)
- 3) Deuteronomy was from the Eighth century B.C. for some (E. Jacob) , and from the time of Josiah for others (Father de Vaux)
- 4) The Sacerdotal version came from the period of exile or after the exile: Sixth century B.C.

It can be seen that the arrangement of the text of the Pentateuch spans at least three centuries.

The problem is, however, even more complex. In 1941, A. Lods singled out three sources in the Yahvist version, four in the Elohist version, six in Deuteronomy, nine in the Sacerdotal version, "not including the additions spread out among eight different authors" writes Father de Vaux. More recently, it has been thought that "many of the constitutions or laws contained in the Pentateuch had parallels outside the Bible going back much further than the dates ascribed to the documents themselves" and that "many of the stories of the Pentateuch presupposed a background that was different from-and older than-the one from which these documents were supposed to have come". This leads on to "an interest in the formation of traditions". The problem then appears so complicated that nobody knows where he is anymore.

The multiplicity of sources brings with it numerous disagreements and repetitions. Father de Vaux gives examples of this overlapping of traditions in the case of the Flood, the kidnapping of Joseph, his adventures in Egypt, disagreement of names relating to the same character, differing descriptions of important events.

Thus the Pentateuch is shown to be formed from various traditions brought together more or less skillfully by its authors. The latter sometimes juxtaposed their compilations and sometimes

adapted the stories for the sake of synthesis. They allowed improbabilities and disagreements to appear in the texts, however, which have led modern man to the objective study of the sources.

As far as textual criticism is concerned, the Pentateuch provides what is probably the most obvious example of adaptations made by the hand of man. These were made at different times in the history of the Jewish people, taken from oral traditions and texts handed down from preceding generations. It was begun in the Tenth or Ninth century B.C. with the Yahvist tradition which took the story from its very beginnings. The latter sketches Israel's own particular destiny to "fit it back into God's Grand Design for humanity" (Father de Vaux). It was concluded in the Sixth century B.C. with the Sacerdotal tradition that is meticulous in its precise mention of dates and genealogies.[10] Father de Vaux writes that "The few stories this tradition has of its own bear witness to legal preoccupations: Sabbatical rest at the completion of the Creation, the alliance with Noah, the alliance with Abraham and the circumcision, the purchase of the Cave of Makpela that gave the Patriarchs land in Canaan". We must bear in mind that the Sacerdotal tradition dates from the time of the deportation to Babylon and the return to Palestine starting in 538 B.C. There is therefore a mixture of religious and purely political problems.

For Genesis alone, the division of the Book into three sources has been firmly established: Father de Vaux in the commentary to his translation lists for each source the passages in the present text of Genesis that rely on them. On the evidence of these data it is possible to pinpoint the contribution made by the various sources to any one of the chapters. For example, in the case of the Creation, the Flood and the period that goes from the Flood to Abraham, occupying as it does the first eleven chapters of Genesis, we can see alternating in the Biblical text a section of the Yahvist and a section of the Sacerdotal texts. The Elohist text is not present in the first eleven chapters. The overlapping of Yahvist and Sacerdotal contributions is here quite clear. For the Creation and up to Noah (first five chapter's), the arrangement is simple: a Yahvist passage alternates with a Sacerdotal passage from beginning to end of the narration. For the Flood and especially chapters 7 and 8 moreover, the cutting of the text according to its source is narrowed down to very short passages and even to a single sentence. In the space of little more than a hundred lines of English text, the text changes seventeen times. It is from this that the improbabilities and contradictions arise when we read the present-day text. (see Table on page 15 for schematic distribution of sources)

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

In these books we enter into the history of the Jewish people, from the time they came to the Promised Land (which is most likely to have been at the end of the Thirteenth century B.C.) to the deportation to Babylon in the Sixth century B.C.

Here stress is laid upon what one might call the 'national event' which is presented as the fulfillment of Divine word. In the narration however, historical accuracy has rather been brushed aside: a work such as the Book of Joshua complies first and foremost with theological intentions. With this in mind, E. Jacob underlines the obvious contradiction between archaeology and the texts in the case of the supposed destruction of Jericho and Ay.

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Phrase</i>	<i>to Chapter</i>	<i>Phrase</i>	<i>Text</i>
The Book of Judges is centered on the defense of the chosen people against surrounding enemies and on the support given to them by God. The Book was adapted several times, as Father A. Lefèvre notes with great objectivity in his Preamble to the Crampon Bible. the various prefaces in the text and the appendices bear witness to this. The story of Ruth is attached to the narrations contained in Judges.				

TABLE OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE YAHVIST AND SACERDOTAL TEXTS IN CHAPTERS 1 TO 11 in GENESIS)

The first figure indicates the chapter.

The second figure in brackets indicates the number of phrases, sometimes divided into two parts indicated by the letters a and b.

Letters: Y indicates Yahvist text S indicates Sacerdotal text

Example: The first line of the table indicates: from Chapter 1, phrase 1 to Chapter 2, phrase 4a, the text published in present day Bibles is the Sacerdotal text.

1	(1)	2	(4a)	S
2	(4b)	4	(26)	Y
5	(1)	5	(32)	S
6	(1)	6	(8)	Y
6	(9)	6	(22)	S
7	(1)	7	(5)	Y
7	(6)			S
7	(7)	7	(10)	Y adapted
7	(11)			S
7	(12)			Y
7	(13)	7	(16a)	S
7	(16b)	7	(17)	Y
7	(18)	7	(21)	S
7	(22)	7	(23)	Y
7	(24)	8	(2a)	S
8	(2b)		(5)	Y
8	(3)	8	(12)	S
8	(6)	8		Y
8	(13a)			S
8	(13b)		(19)	Y
8	(14)	8	(22)	S
8	(20)	8	(17)	Y
9	(1)	9	(27)	S
9	(18)	9	(7)	Y
9	(28)	10	(19)	S
10	(8)	10	(23)	Y
10	(20)	10	(30)	S
10	(24)	10	(32)	Y
10	(31)	10	(9)	S
11	(1)	11	(32)	Y
11	(10)	11		S

What simpler illustration can there be of the way men have manipulated the Biblical Scriptures?

The Book of Samuel and the two Books of Kings are above all biographical collections concerning Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon. Their historic worth is the subject of debate. From this point of view E. Jacob finds numerous errors in it, because there are sometimes two and even three versions of the same event. The prophets Elias, Elisha and Isaiah also figure here, mixing elements of history and legend. For other commentators, such as Father A. Lefèvre, "the historical value of these books is fundamental."

Chronicles I & II, the Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah have a single author, called 'the Chronicler', writing in the Fourth century B.C. He resumes the whole history of the Creation up to this period, although his genealogical tables only go up to David. In actual fact, he is using above all the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings, "mechanically copying them out without regard to the inconsistencies" (E. Jacob), but he nevertheless adds precise facts that have been confirmed by archaeology. In these works care is taken to adapt history to the needs of theology. E. Jacob notes that the author "sometimes writes history according to theology". "To explain the fact that King Manasseh, who was a sacrilegious persecutor, had a long and prosperous reign, he postulates a conversion of the King during a stay in Assyria (Chronicles II, 33/11) although there is no mention of this in any Biblical or non-Biblical source". The Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah have been severely criticised because they are full of obscure points, and because the period they deal with (the Fourth century B.C.) is itself not very well known, there being few non-Biblical documents from it.

The Books of Tobit, Judith and Esther are classed among the Historical Books. In them very big liberties are taken with history. proper names are changed, characters and events are invented, all for the best of religious reasons. They are in fact stories designed to serve a moral end, peppered with historical improbabilities and inaccuracies.

The Books of Maccabees are of quite a different order. They provide a version of events that took place in the Second century B.C. which is as exact a record of the history of this period as may be found. It is for this reason that they constitute accounts of great value.

The collection of books under the heading 'historical' is therefore highly disparate. History is treated in both a scientific and a whimsical fashion.

THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

Under this heading we find the preachings of various prophets who in the Old Testament have been classed separately from the first great prophets such as Moses, Samuel, Elias and Elisha, whose teachings are referred to in other books.

The prophetic books cover the period from the Eighth to the Second century B.C.

In the Eighth century B.C., there were the books of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Michah. The first of these is famous for his condemnation of social injustice, the second for his religious corruption which leads him to bodily suffering (for being forced to marry a sacred harlot of a pagan cult), like God suffering for the degradation of His people but still granting them His love. Isaiah is a figure of political history. he is consulted by kings and dominates events; he is the prophet of grandeur. In addition to his personal works, his oracles are published by his disciples right up until the Third century B.C.: protests against iniquities, fear of God's judgement, proclamations of liberation at the time of exile and later on the return of the Jews to Palestine. It is certain that in the case of the second and third Isaiah, the prophetic intention is paralleled by political considerations that are as clear as daylight. The preaching of Michah, a contemporary of Isaiah, follows the same general ideas.

In the Seventh century B.C., Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Nahum and Habakkuk distinguished themselves by their preachings. Jeremiah became a martyr. His oracles were collected by Baruch who is also perhaps the author of Lamentations.

The period of exile in Babylon at the beginning of the Sixth century B.C. gave birth to intense prophetic activity. Ezekiel figures importantly as the consoler of his brothers, inspiring hope among them. His visions are famous. The Book of Obadiah deals with the misery of a conquered Jerusalem.

After the exile, which came to an end in 538 B.C., prophetic activity resumed with Haggai and Zechariah who urged the reconstruction of the Temple. When it was completed, writings going under the name of Malachi appeared. They contain various oracles of a spiritual nature.

One wonders why the Book of Jonah is included in the prophetic books when the Old Testament does not give it any real text to speak of. Jonah is a story from which one principle fact emerges: the necessary submission to Divine Will.

Daniel was written in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek). According to Christian commentators, it is a , disconcerting' Apocalypse from an historical point of view. It is probably a work from the Maccabean period, Second century B.C. Its author wished to maintain the faith of his countrymen, at the time of the 'abomination of desolation', by convincing them that the moment of deliverance was at hand. (E. Jacob)

THE BOOKS OF POETRY AND WISDOM

These form collections of unquestionable literary unity. Foremost among them are the Psalms, the greatest monument to Hebrew poetry. A large number were composed by David and the others by priests and levites. Their themes are praises, supplications and meditations, and they served a liturgical function.

The book of Job, the book of wisdom and piety *par excellence*, probably dates from 400-500 B.C.

The author of 'Lamentations' on the fall of Jerusalem at the beginning of the Sixth century B.C. may well be Jeremiah.

We must once again mention the Song of Songs, allegorical chants mostly about Divine love, the Book of Proverbs, a collection of the words of Solomon and other wise men of the court, and Ecclesiastes or Koheleth, where earthly happiness and wisdom are debated.

We have, therefore, a collection of works with highly disparate contents written over at least seven centuries, using extremely varied sources before being amalgamated inside a single work.

How was this collection able, over the centuries, to constitute an inseparable whole and-with a few variations according to community-become the book containing the Judeo-Christian Revelation? This book was called in Greek the 'canon' because of the idea of intangibility it conveys.

The amalgam does not date from the Christian period, but from Judaism itself, probably with a primary stage in the Seventh century B.C. before later books were added to those already accepted. It is to be noted however that the first five books, forming the Torah or Pentateuch, have always been given pride of place. Once the proclamations of the prophets (the prediction of a chastisement commensurate with misdemeanour) had been fulfilled, there was no difficulty in adding their texts to the books that had already been admitted. The same was true for the assurances of hope given by these prophets. By the Second century B.C., the 'Canon' of the prophets had been formed.

Other books, e.g. Psalms, on account of their liturgical function, were integrated along with further writings, such as Lamentations, the Book of Wisdom and the Book of Job.

Christianity, which was initially Judeo-Christianity, has been carefully studied-as we shall see later on-by modern authors, such as Cardinal Daniélou. Before it was transformed under Paul's influence, Christianity accepted the heritage of the Old Testament without difficulty. The authors of the Gospels adhered very strictly to the latter, but whereas a 'purge' has been made of the Gospels by ruling out the 'Apocrypha', the same selection has not been deemed necessary for the Old Testament. Everything, or nearly everything, has been accepted.

Who would have dared dispute any aspects of this disparate amalgam before the end of the Middle Ages-in the West at least? The answer is nobody, or almost nobody. From the end of the Middle Ages up to the beginning of modern times, one or two critics began to appear; but, as we have already seen, the Church Authorities have always succeeded in having their own way. Nowadays, there is without doubt a genuine body of textual criticism, but even if ecclesiastic specialists have devoted many of their efforts to examining a multitude of detailed points, they have preferred not to go too deeply into what they euphemistically call 'difficulties'. They hardly seem disposed to study them in the light of modern knowledge. They may well establish parallels with history-principally when history and Biblical narration appear to be in agreement-but so far they have not committed themselves to be a frank and thorough comparison with scientific ideas. They realize that this would lead people to contest notions about the truth of Judeo-Christian Scriptures, which have so far remained undisputed.

The Old Testament and Science Findings

Few of the subjects dealt within the Old Testament, and likewise the Gospels, give rise to a confrontation with the data of modern knowledge. When an incompatibility does occur between the Biblical text and science, however, it is on extremely important points.

As we have already seen in the preceding chapter, historical errors were found in the Bible and we have quoted several of these pinpointed by Jewish and Christian experts in exegesis. The latter have naturally had a tendency to minimize the importance of such errors. They find it quite natural for a sacred author to present historical fact in accordance with theology and to write history to suit certain needs. We shall see further on, in the case of the Gospel according to Matthew, the same liberties taken with reality and the same commentaries aimed at making admissible as reality what is in contradiction to it. A logical and objective mind cannot be content with this procedure.

From a logical angle, it is possible to single out a large number of contradictions and improbabilities. The existence of different sources that might have been used in the writing of a description may be at the origin of two different presentations of the same fact. This is not all; different adaptations, later additions to the text itself, like the commentaries added *a posteriori*, then included in the text later on when a new copy was made-these are perfectly recognized by specialists in textual criticism and very frankly underlined by some of them. In the case of the Pentateuch alone, for example, Father de Vaux in the General Introduction preceding his translation of Genesis (pages 13 and 14), has drawn attention to numerous disagreements. We shall not quote them here since we shall be quoting several of them later on in this study. The general impression one gains is that one must not follow the text to the letter.

Here is a very typical example:

In Genesis (6, 3), God decides just before the Flood henceforth to limit man's lifespan to one hundred and twenty years, "... his days shall be a hundred and twenty years". Further on however, we note in Genesis (11, 10-32) that the ten descendants of Noah had lifespans that range from 148 to 600 years (see table in this chapter showing Noah's descendants down to Abraham). The contradiction between these two passages is quite obvious. The explanation is elementary. The first passage (Genesis 6, 3) is a Yahvist text, probably dating as we have already seen from the Tenth century B.C. The second passage in Genesis (11, 10-32) is a much more recent text (Sixth century B.C.) from the Sacerdotal version. This version is at the origin of these genealogies, which are as precise in their information on lifespans as they are improbable when taken *en masse*.

It is in Genesis that we find the most evident incompatibilities with modern science. These concern three essential points:

- 1) the Creation of the world and its stages;
- 2) the date of the Creation of the world and the date of man's appearance on earth;
- 3) the description of the Flood.

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

As Father de Vaux points out, Genesis "starts with two juxtaposed descriptions of the Creation". When examining them from the point of view of their compatibility with modern scientific data, we must look at each one separately.

First Description of the Creation

The first description occupies the first chapter and the very first verses of the second chapter. It is a masterpiece of inaccuracy from a scientific point of view. It must be examined one paragraph at a time. The text reproduced here is from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.[11]

Chapter 1, verses 1 & 2:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters."

It is quite possible to admit that before the Creation of the Earth, what was to become the Universe as we know it was covered in darkness. To mention the existence of water at this period is however quite simply pure imagination. We shall see in the third part of this book how there is every indication that at the initial stage of the formation of the universe a gaseous mass existed. It is an error to place water in it.

Verses 3 to 5:

"And God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day."

The light circulating in the Universe is the result of complex reactions in the stars. We shall come back to them in the third part of this work. At this stage in the Creation, however, according to the Bible, the stars were not yet formed. The "lights' of the firmament are not mentioned in Genesis until verse 14, when they were created on the Fourth day, "to separate the day from the night", "to give light upon earth"; all of which is accurate. It is illogical, however, to mention the result (light) on the first day, when the cause of this light was created three days later. The fact that the existence of evening and morning is placed on the first day is moreover, purely imaginary; the existence of evening and morning as elements of a single day is only conceivable after the creation of the earth and its rotation under the light of its own star, the Sun!

-verses 6 to 8:

"And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day."

The myth of the waters is continued here with their separation into two layers by a firmament that in the description of the Flood allows the waters above to pass through and flow onto the earth. This image of the division of the waters into two masses is scientifically unacceptable.

-verses 9 to 13:

"And God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind upon the earth.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day."

The fact that continents emerged at the period in the earth's history, when it was still covered with water, is quite acceptable scientifically. What is totally untenable is that a highly organized vegetable kingdom with reproduction by seed could have appeared before the existence of the sun (in Genesis it does not appear until the fourth day), and likewise the establishment of alternating nights and days.

-verses 14 to 19:

"And God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmaments of the heavens to separate the day from night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day."

Here the Biblical author's description is acceptable. The only criticism one could level at this passage is the position it occupies in the description as a whole. Earth and Moon emanated, as we know, from their original star, the Sun. To place the creation of the Sun and Moon after the creation of the Earth is contrary to the most firmly established ideas on the formation of the elements of the Solar System.

-verses 20 to 30:

"And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them saying,

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day."

This passage contains assertions which are unacceptable.

According to Genesis, the animal kingdom began with the appearance of creatures of the sea and winged birds. The Biblical description informs us that it was not until the next day-as we shall see in the following verses-that the earth itself was populated by animals.

It is certain that the origins of life came from the sea, but this question will not be dealt with until the third part of this book. From the sea, the earth was colonized, as it were, by the animal kingdom. It is from animals living on the surface of the earth, and in particular from one species of reptile which lived in the Second era, that it is thought the birds originated. Numerous biological characteristics common to both species make this deduction possible. The beasts of the earth are not however mentioned until the sixth day in Genesis; after the appearance of the birds. This order of appearance, beasts of the earth after birds, is not therefore acceptable.

-verses 24 to 31:

"And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.' And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good."

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion (sic) over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth'."

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

"And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' And God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.'" And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day."

This is the description of the culmination of the Creation. The author lists all the living creatures not mentioned before and describes the various kinds of food for man and beast.

As we have seen, the error was to place the appearance of beasts of the earth after that of the birds. Man's appearance is however correctly situated after the other species of living things.

The description of the Creation finishes in the first three verses of Chapter 2:

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host (sic) of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation;

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created."

This description of the seventh day calls for some comment.

Firstly the meaning of certain words. The text is taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible mentioned above. The word 'host' signifies here, in all probability, the multitude of beings created. As for the expression 'he rested', it is a manner of translating the Hebrew word 'shabbath', from which the Jewish day for rest is derived, hence the expression in English 'sabbath'.

It is quite clear that the 'rest' that God is said to have taken after his six days' work is a legend. There is nevertheless an explanation for this. We must bear in mind that the description of the creation examined here is taken from the so-called Sacerdotal version, written by priests and scribes who were the spiritual successors of Ezekiel, the prophet of the exile to Babylon writing in the Sixth century B.C. We have already seen how the priests took the Yahvist and Elohist versions of Genesis and remodelled them after their own fashion in accordance with their own preoccupations. Father de Vaux has written that the 'legalist' character of these writings was very essential. An outline of this has already been given above.

Whereas the Yahvist text of the Creation, written several centuries before the Sacerdotal text, makes no mention of God's sabbath, taken after the fatigue of a week's labor, the authors of the Sacerdotal text bring it into their description. They divide the latter into separate days, with the very precise indication of the days of the week. They build it around the sabbatic day of rest which they have to justify to the faithful by pointing out that God was the first to respect it. Subsequent to this practical necessity, the description that follows has an apparently logical religious order, but in fact scientific data permit us to qualify the latter as being of a whimsical nature.

The idea that successive phases of the Creation, as seen by the Sacerdotal authors in their desire to incite people to religious observation, could have been compressed into the space of one week is one that cannot be defended from a scientific point of view. Today we are perfectly aware that the formation of the Universe and the Earth took place in stages that lasted for very long periods. (In the third part of the present work, we shall examine this question when we come to look at the Qur'anic data concerning the Creation). Even if the description came to a close on the evening of the sixth day, without mentioning the seventh day, the 'sabbath' when God is said to have rested, and even if, as in the Qur'anic description, we were permitted to think that they were in fact undefined periods rather than actual days, the Sacerdotal description would still not be any more acceptable. The succession of episodes it contains is an absolute contradiction with elementary scientific knowledge.

It may be seen therefore that the Sacerdotal description of the Creation stands out as an imaginative and ingenious fabrication. Its purpose was quite different from that of making the truth known.

Second Description

The second description of the Creation in Genesis follows immediately upon the first without comment or transitional passage. It does not provoke the same objections.

We must remember that this description is roughly three centuries older and is very short. It allows more space to the creation of man and earthly paradise than to the creation of the Earth and Heavens. It mentions this very briefly

(Chapter 2, 4b-7): "In the day that Yahweh God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up-for Yahweh God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground;

but a flood went up from earth and watered the whole face of the ground-then Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

This is the Yahvist text that appears in the text of present day Bibles. The Sacerdotal text was added to it later on, but one may ask if it was originally so brief. Nobody is in a position to say whether the Yahvist text has not, in the course of time, been pared down. We do not know if the few lines we possess represent all that the oldest Biblical text of the Creation had to say.

The Yahvist description does not mention the actual formation of the Earth or the Heavens. It makes it clear that when God created man, there was no vegetation on Earth (it had not yet rained), even though the waters of the Earth had covered its surface. The sequel to the text confirms this: God planted a garden at the same time as man was created. The vegetable kingdom therefore appears on Earth at the same time as man. This is scientifically inaccurate; man did not appear on Earth until a long time after vegetation had been growing on it. We do not know how many hundreds of millions of years separate the two events.

This is the only criticism that one can level at the Yahvist text. The fact that it does not place the creation of man in time in relation to the formation of the world and the earth, unlike the Sacerdotal text, which places them in the same week, frees it from the serious objections raised against the latter.

THE DATE OF THE WORLD'S CREATION AND THE DATE OF MAN'S APPEARANCE ON EARTH.

The Jewish calendar, which follows the data contained in the Old Testament, places the dates of the above very precisely. The second half of the Christian year 1975 corresponds to the

beginning of the 5, 736th year of the creation of the world. The creation of man followed several days later, so that he has the same numerical age, counted in years, as in the Jewish calendar.

There is probably a correction to be made on account of the fact that time was originally calculated in lunar years, while the calendar used in the West is based on solar years. This correction would have to be made if one wanted to be absolutely exact, but as it represents only 3%, it is of very little consequence. To simplify our calculations, it is easier to disregard it. What matters here is the order of magnitude. It is therefore of little importance if, over a thousand years, our calculations are thirty years out. We are nearer the truth in following this Hebraic estimate of the creation of the world if we say that it happened roughly thirty-seven centuries before Christ.

What does modern science tell us? It would be difficult to reply to the question concerning the formation of the Universe. All we can provide figures for is the era in time when the solar system was formed. It is possible to arrive at a reasonable approximation of this. The time between it and the present is estimated at four and a half billion years. We can therefore measure the margin separating the firmly established reality we know today and the data taken from the Old Testament. We shall expand on this in the third part of the present work. These facts emerge from a close scrutiny of the Biblical text. Genesis provides very precise information on the time that elapsed between Adam and Abraham. For the period from the time of Abraham to the beginnings of Christianity, the information provided is insufficient. It must be supported by other sources.

1. From Adam to Abraham

Genesis provides extremely precise genealogical data in Chapters 4, 5, 11, 21 and 25. They concern all of Abraham's ancestors in direct line back to Adam. They give the length of time each person lived, the father's age at the birth of the son and thus make it easily possible to ascertain the dates of birth and death of each ancestor in relation to the creation of Adam, as the table indicates.

All the data used in this table come from the Sacerdotal text of Genesis, the only Biblical text that provides information of this kind. It may be deduced, according to the Bible, that Abraham was born 1,948 years after Adam.

ABRAHAM'S GENEALOGY

<i>Name</i>	<i>date of birth after creation of Adam</i>	<i>length of life</i>	<i>date of death after creation of Adam</i>
Adam		930	930
Seth	130	912	1042
Enosch	235	905	1140
Kenan	325	910	1235
Mahalaleel	395	895	1290
Jared	460	962	1422
Enoch	622	365	987
Methuselah	687	969	1656
Lamech	874	777	1651
Noah	1056	950	2006
Shem	1556	600	2156
Arpachshad	1658	438	2096
Shelah	1693	433	2122
Eber	1723	464	2187
Peleg	1757	239	1996
Reu	1787	239	2026
Serug	1819	230	2049
Nahor	1849	148	1997
Terah	1878	205	2083
Abraham	1948	175	2123

2. From Abraham to The Beginnings Of Christianity

The Bible does not provide any numerical information on this period that might lead to such precise estimates as those found in Genesis on Abraham's ancestors. We must look to other sources to estimate the time separating Abraham from Jesus. At present, allowing for a slight margin of error, the time of Abraham is situated at roughly eighteen centuries before Jesus. Combined with information in Genesis on the interval separating Abraham and Adam, this would place Adam at roughly thirty-eight centuries before Jesus. This estimate is undeniably wrong: the origins of this inaccuracy arise from the mistakes in the Bible on the Adam-Abraham period. The Jewish tradition still finds its calendar on this. Nowadays, we can challenge the traditional defenders of Biblical truth with the incompatibility between the whimsical estimates of Jewish priests living in the Sixth century B.C. and modern data. For centuries, the events of antiquity relating to Jesus were situated in time according to information based on these estimates.

Before modern times, editions of the Bible frequently provided the reader with a preamble explaining the historical sequence of events that had come to pass between the creation of the world and the time when the books were edited. The figures vary slightly according to the time. For example, the Clementine Vulgate, 1621, gave this information, although it did place Abraham a little earlier and the Creation at roughly the 40th century B.C. Walton's polyglot Bible, produced in the 17th century, in addition to Biblical texts in several languages, gave the reader tables similar to the one shown here for Abraham's ancestors. Almost all the estimates coincide with the figures given here. With the arrival of modern times, editors were no longer able to maintain such whimsical chronologies without going against scientific discovery that placed the Creation at a much earlier date. They were content to abolish these tables and preambles, but they avoided warning the reader that the Biblical texts on which these chronologies were based had become obsolete and could no longer be considered to express the truth. They preferred to draw a modest veil over them, and invent set-phrases of cunning dialectics that would make acceptable the text as it had formerly been, without any subtractions from it.

This is why the genealogies contained in the Sacerdotal text of the Bible are still honoured, even though in the Twentieth century one cannot reasonably continue to count time on the basis of such fiction.

Modern scientific data do not allow us to establish the date of man's appearance on earth beyond a certain limit. We may be certain that man, with the capacity for action and intelligent thought that distinguishes him from beings that appear to be anatomically similar to him, existed on Earth after a certain estimable date. Nobody however can say at what exact date he appeared. What we can say today is that remains have been found of a humanity capable of human thought and action whose age may be calculated in tens of thousands of years.

This approximate dating refers to the prehistoric human species, the most recently discovered being the Cro-Magnon Man. There have of course been many other discoveries all over the world of remains that appear to be human. These relate to less highly evolved species, and their age could be somewhere in the hundreds of thousands of years. But were they genuine men?

Whatever the answer may be, scientific data are sufficiently precise concerning the prehistoric species like the Cro-Magnon Man, to be able to place them much further back than the epoch in which Genesis places the first men. There is therefore an obvious incompatibility between what we can derive from the numerical data in Genesis about the date of man's appearance on Earth and the firmly established facts of modern scientific knowledge.

THE FLOOD

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are devoted to the description of the Flood. In actual fact, there are two descriptions; they have not been placed side by side, but are distributed all the way through. Passages are interwoven to give the appearance of a coherent succession of varying episodes. In these three chapters there are, in reality, blatant contradictions; here again the explanation lies in the existence of two quite distinct sources: the Yahvist and Sacerdotal versions.

It has been shown earlier that they formed a disparate amalgam; each original text has been broken down into paragraphs or phrases, elements of one source alternating with the other, so that in the course of the complete description, we go from one to another seventeen times in roughly one hundred lines of English text.

Taken as a whole, the story goes as follows:

Man's corruption had become widespread, so God decided to annihilate him along with all the other living creatures. He warned Noah and told him to construct the Ark into which he was to take his wife, his three sons and their wives, along with other living creatures. The two sources differ for the latter. one passage (Sacerdotal) says that Noah was to take one pair of each species; then in the passage that follows (Yahvist) it is stated that God ordered him to take seven males and seven females from each of the so-called 'pure' animal species, and a single pair from the 'impure' species. Further on, however, it is stated that Noah actually took one pair of each animal. Specialists, such as Father de Vaux, state that the passage in question is from an adaptation of the Yahvist description.

Rainwater is given as the agent of the Flood in one (Yahvist) passage, but in another (Sacerdotal), the Flood is given a double cause: rainwater and the waters of the Earth.

The Earth was submerged right up to and above the mountain peaks. All life perished. After one year, when the waters had receded, Noah emerged from the Ark that had come to rest on Mount Ararat.

One might add that the Flood lasted differing lengths of time according to the source used: forty days for the Yahvist version and one hundred and fifty in the Sacerdotal text.

The Yahvist version does not tell us when the event took place in Noah's life, but the Sacerdotal text tells us that he was six hundred years old. The latter also provides information in its genealogies that situates him in relation to Adam and Abraham. If we calculate according to the information contained in Genesis, Noah was born 1,056 years after Adam (see table of Abraham's Genealogy) and the Flood therefore took place 1,656 years after the creation of Adam. In relation to Abraham, Genesis places the Flood 292 years before the birth of this Patriarch.

According to Genesis, the Flood affected the whole of the human race and all living creatures created by God on the face of the Earth were destroyed. Humanity was then reconstituted by Noah's three sons and their wives so that when Abraham was born roughly three centuries later, he found a humanity that was already re-formed into separate communities. How could this reconstruction have taken place in such a short time? This simple observation deprives the narration of all verisimilitude.

Furthermore, historical data show its incompatibility with modern knowledge. Abraham is placed in the period 1800-1850 B.C., and if the Flood took place, as Genesis suggests in its genealogies, roughly three centuries before Abraham, we would have to place him somewhere in the Twenty-first to Twenty-second century B.C. Modern historical knowledge confirms that at

this period, civilizations had sprung up in several parts of the world; for their remains have been left to posterity.

In the case of Egypt for example, the remains correspond to the period preceding the Middle Kingdom (2,100 B.C.) at roughly the date of the First Intermediate Period before the Eleventh Dynasty. In Babylonia it is the Third Dynasty at Ur. We know for certain that there was no break in these civilizations, so that there could have been no destruction affecting the whole of humanity, as it appears in the Bible.

We cannot therefore consider that these three Biblical narrations provide man with an account of facts that correspond to the truth. We are obliged to admit that, objectively speaking, the texts which have come down to us do not represent the expression of reality. We may ask ourselves whether it is possible for God to have revealed anything other than the truth. It is difficult to entertain the idea that God taught to man ideas that were not only fictitious, but contradictory. We naturally arrive therefore at the hypothesis that distortions occurred that were made by man or that arose from traditions passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth, or from the texts of these traditions once they were written down. When one knows that a work such as Genesis was adapted at least twice over a period of not less than three centuries, it is hardly surprising to find improbabilities or descriptions that are incompatible with reality. This is because the progress made in human knowledge has enabled us to know, if not everything, enough at least about certain events to be able to judge the degree of compatibility between our knowledge and the ancient descriptions of them. There is nothing more logical than to maintain this interpretation of Biblical errors which only implicates man himself. It is a great pity that the majority of commentators, both Jewish and Christian, do not hold with it. The arguments they use nevertheless deserve careful attention.

Position Of Christian Authors With Regard To Scientific Error In The Biblical Texts.

A Critical Examination.

One is struck by the diverse nature of Christian commentators' reactions to the existence of these accumulated errors, improbabilities and contradictions. Certain commentators acknowledge some of them and do not hesitate in their work to tackle thorny problems. Others pass lightly over unacceptable statements and insist on defending the text word for word. The latter try to convince people by apologetic declarations, heavily reinforced by arguments which are often unexpected, in the hope that what is logically unacceptable will be forgotten.

In the Introduction to his translation of Genesis, Father de Vaux acknowledges the existence of critical arguments and even expands upon their cogency. Nevertheless, for him the objective reconstitution of past events has little interest. As he writes in his notes, the fact that the Bible resumes "the memory of one or two disastrous floods of the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates,

enlarged by tradition until they took on the dimensions of a universal cataclysm" is neither here nor there; "the essential thing is, however, that the sacred author has infused into this memory eternal teachings on the justice and mercy of God toward the malice of man and the salvation of the righteous."

In this way justification is found for the transformation of a popular legend into an event of divine proportions-and it is as such that it is thought fit to present the legend to men's faith-following the principle that an author has made use of it to illustrate religious teachings. An apologetic position of this kind justifies all the liberties taken in the composition of writings which are supposed to be sacred and to contain the word of God. If one acknowledges such human interference in what is divine, all the human manipulations of the Biblical texts will be accounted for. If there are theological intentions, all manipulations become legitimate; so that those of the 'Sacerdotal' authors of the Sixth century are justified, including their legalist preoccupations that turned into the whimsical descriptions we have already seen.

A large number of Christian commentators have found it more ingenious to explain errors, improbabilities and contradictions in Biblical descriptions by using the excuse that the Biblical authors were expressing ideas in accordance with the social factors of a different culture or mentality. From this arose the definition of respective 'literary genres' which was introduced into the subtle dialectics of commentators, so that it accounts for all difficulties. Any contradictions there are between two texts are then explained by the difference in the way each author expressed ideas in his own particular 'literary genre'. This argument is not, of course, acknowledged by everybody because it lacks gravity. It has not entirely fallen into disuse today however, and we shall see in the New Testament its extravagant use as an attempt to explain blatant contradictions in the Gospels.

Another way of making acceptable what would be rejected by logic when applied to a litigious text, is to surround the text in question with apologetical considerations. The reader's attention is distracted from the crucial problem of the truth of the text itself and deflected towards other problems.

Cardinal Daniélou's reflections on the Flood follow this mode of expression. They appear in the review *Living God* (Dieu Vivant)[12] under the title: '*Flood, Baptism, Judgment*', (*Deluge, Baptême, Jugement*') where he writes "The oldest tradition of the Church has seen in the theology of the Flood an image of Christ and the Church". It is "an episode of great significance" . . . "a judgment striking the whole human race." Having quoted from Origen in his *Homilies on Ezekiel*, he talks of "'the shipwreck of the entire universe saved in the Ark", Cardinal Daniélou dwells upon the value of the number eight "expressing the number of people that were saved in the Ark (Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives)". He turns to his own use Justin's writings in his *Dialogue*. "They represent the symbol of the eighth day when Christ rose from the dead" and "Noah, the first born of a new creation, is an image of Christ who was to do in reality what Noah had prefigured." He continues the comparison between Noah on the one hand, who was saved by the ark made of wood and the water that made it float ("water of the Flood from which a new humanity was born"), and on the other, the cross made of wood. He stresses the value of this symbolism and concludes by underlining the "spiritual and doctrinal wealth of the sacrament of the Flood" (sic).

There is much that one could say about such apologetical comparisons. We should always remember that they are commentaries on an event that it is not possible to defend as reality, either on a universal scale or in terms of the time in which the Bible places it. With a commentary such as Cardinal Daniélou's we are back in the Middle Ages, where the text had to be accepted as it was and any discussion, other than conformist, was off the point.

It is nevertheless reassuring to find that prior to that age of imposed obscurantism, highly logical attitudes were adopted. One might mention those of Saint Augustine which proceed from his thought, that was singularly advanced for the age he lived in. At the time of the Fathers of the Church, there must have been problems of textual criticism because Saint Augustine raises them in his letter No. 82. The most typical of them is the following passage:

"It is solely to those books of Scripture which are called 'canonic' that I have learned to grant such attention and respect that I firmly believe that their authors have made no errors in writing them. When I encounter in these books a statement which seems to contradict reality, I am in no doubt that either the text (of my copy) is faulty, or that the translator has not been faithful to the original, or that my understanding is deficient."

It was inconceivable to Saint Augustine that a sacred text might contain an error. Saint Augustine defined very clearly the dogma of infallibility when, confronted with a passage that seemed to contradict the truth, he thought of looking for its cause, without excluding the hypothesis of a human fault. This is the attitude of a believer with a critical outlook. In Saint Augustine's day, there was no possibility of a confrontation between the Biblical text and science. An open-mindedness akin to his would today eliminate a lot of the difficulties raised by the confrontation of certain Biblical texts with scientific knowledge.

Present-day specialists, on the contrary, go to great trouble to defend the Biblical text from any accusation of error. In his introduction to Genesis, Father de Vaux explains the reasons compelling him to defend the text at all costs, even if, quite obviously, it is historically or scientifically unacceptable. He asks us not to view Biblical history "according to the rules of historical study observed by people today", as if the existence of several different ways of writing history was possible. History, when it is told in an inaccurate fashion, (as anyone will admit), becomes a historical novel. Here however, it does not have to comply with the standards established by our conceptions. The Biblical commentator rejects any verification of Biblical descriptions through geology, paleontology or pre-historical data. "The Bible is not answerable to any of these disciplines, and were one to confront it with the data obtained from these sciences, it would only lead to an unreal opposition or an artificial concordance." [13] One might point out that these reflections are made on what, in Genesis, is in no way in harmony with modern scientific data-in this case the first eleven chapters. When however, in the present day, a few descriptions have been perfectly verified, in this case certain episodes from the time of the patriarchs, the author does not fail to support the truth of the Bible with modern knowledge. "The doubt cast upon these descriptions should yield to the favorable witness that history and eastern archaeology bear them." [14] In other words. if science is useful in confirming the Biblical description, it is invoked, but if it invalidates the latter, reference to it is not permitted.

To reconcile the irreconcilable, i.e. the theory of the truth of the Bible with the inaccurate nature of certain facts reported in the descriptions in the Old Testament, modern theologians have applied their efforts to a revision of the classical concepts of truth. It lies outside the scope of this book to give a detailed expose of the subtle ideas that are developed at length in works dealing with the truth of the Bible; such as O. Loretz's work (1972) *What is the Truth of the Bible?* (Quelle est la Vérité de la Bible?)[15]. This judgment concerning science will have to suffice:

The author remarks that the Second Vatican Council "has avoided providing rules to distinguish between error and truth in the Bible. Basic considerations show that this is impossible, because the Church cannot determine the truth or otherwise of scientific methods in such a way as to decide in principle and on a general level the question of the truth of the Scriptures".

It is obvious that the Church is not in a position to make a pronouncement on the value of scientific 'method' as a means of access to knowledge. The point here is quite different. It is not a question of theories, but of firmly established facts. In our day and age, it is not necessary to be highly learned to know that the world was not created thirty-seven or thirty-eight centuries ago. We know that man did not appear then and that the Biblical genealogies on which this estimate is based have been proven wrong beyond any shadow of a doubt. The author quoted here must be aware of this. His statements on science are only aimed at side-stepping the issue so that he does not have to deal with it the way he ought to.

The reminder of all these different attitudes adopted by Christian authors when confronted with the scientific errors of Biblical texts is a good illustration of the uneasiness they engender. It recalls the impossibility of defining a logical position other than by recognizing their human origins and the impossibility of acknowledging that they form part of a Revelation.

The uneasiness prevalent in Christian circles concerning the Revelation became clear at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) where it took no less than five drafts before there was any agreement on the final text, after three years of discussions. It was only then that "this painful situation threatening to engulf the Council" came to an end, to use His Grace Weber's expression in his introduction to the Conciliar Document No. 4 on the Revelation[16].

Two sentences in this document concerning the Old Testament (chap IV, page 53) describe the imperfections and obsolescence of certain texts in a way that cannot be contested:

"In view of the human situation prevailing before Christ's foundation of salvation, the Books of *the Old Testament* enable everybody to know who is God and who is man, and also the way in which God, in his justice and mercy, behaves towards men. These books, *even though they contain material which is imperfect and obsolete, nevertheless bear witness to truly divine teachings.*"

There is no better statement than the use of the adjectives 'imperfect' and 'obsolete' applied to certain texts, to indicate that the latter are open to criticism and might even be abandoned; the principle is very clearly acknowledged.

This text forms part of a general declaration which was definitively ratified by 2,344 votes to 6; nevertheless, one might question this almost total unanimity. In actual fact, in the commentaries of the official document signed by His Grace Weber, there is one phrase in particular which obviously corrects the solemn affirmation of the council on the obsolescence of certain texts: "Certain books of the Jewish Bible have a temporary application and have something imperfect in them."

'Obsolete', the expression used in the official declaration, is hardly a synonym for 'temporary application', to use the commentator's phrase. As for the epithet 'Jewish' which the latter curiously adds, it suggests that the conciliar text only criticized the version in Hebrew. This is not at all the case. It is indeed the Christian Old Testament alone that, at the Council, was the object of a judgment concerning the imperfection and obsolescence of certain parts.

Conclusions

The Biblical Scriptures must be examined without being embellished artificially with qualities one would like them to have. They must be seen objectively as they are. This implies not only a knowledge of the texts, but also of their history. The latter makes it possible to form an idea of the circumstances which brought about textual adaptations over the centuries, the slow formation of the collection that we have today, with its numerous substractions and additions.

The above makes it quite possible to believe that different versions of the same description can be found in the Old Testament, as well as contradictions, historical errors, improbabilities and incompatibilities with firmly established scientific data. They are quite natural in human works of a very great age. How could one fail to find them in the books written in the same conditions in which the Biblical text was composed?

At a time when it was not yet possible to ask scientific questions, and one could only decide on improbabilities or contradictions, a man of good sense, such as Saint Augustine, considered that God could not teach man things that did not correspond to reality. He therefore put forward the principle that it was not possible for an affirmation contrary to the truth to be of divine origin, and was prepared to exclude from all the sacred texts anything that appeared to him to merit exclusion on these grounds.

Later, at a time when the incompatibility of certain passages of the Bible with modern knowledge has been realized, the same attitude has not been followed. This refusal has been so insistent that a whole literature has sprung up, aimed at justifying the fact that, in the face of all opposition, texts have been retained in the Bible that have no reason to be there.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) has greatly reduced this uncompromising attitude by introducing reservations about the "Books of the Old Testament" which "contain material that is imperfect and obsolete". One wonders if this will remain a pious wish or if it will be followed by

a change in attitude towards material which, in the Twentieth century, is no longer acceptable in the books of the Bible. In actual fact, save for any human manipulation, the latter were destined to be the "witness of true teachings coming from God".

The Gospels

Introduction

Many readers of the Gospels are embarrassed and even abashed when they stop to think about the meaning of certain descriptions. The same is true when they make comparisons between different versions of the same event found in several Gospels. This observation is made by Father Roguet in his book *Initiation to the Gospels* (Initiation à l'Évangile)[17]. With the wide experience he has gained in his many years of answering perturbed readers' letters in a Catholic weekly, he has been able to assess just how greatly they have been worried by what they have read. His questioners come from widely varying social and cultural backgrounds. He notes that their requests for explanations concern texts that are "considered abstruse, incomprehensible, if not contradictory, absurd or scandalous". There can be no doubt that a complete reading of the Gospels is likely to disturb Christians profoundly.

This observation is very recent: Father Roguet's book was published in 1973. Not so very long ago, the majority of Christians knew only selected sections of the Gospels that were read during services or commented upon during sermons. With the exception of the Protestants, it was not customary for Christians to read the Gospels in their entirety. Books of religious instruction only contained extracts; the *in extenso* text hardly circulated at all. At a Roman Catholic school I had copies of the works of Virgil and Plato, but I did not have the New Testament. The Greek text of this would nevertheless have been very instructive: it was only much later on that I realized why they had not set us translations of the holy writings of Christianity. The latter could have led us to ask our teachers questions they would have found it difficult to answer.

These discoveries, made if one has a critical outlook during a reading *in extens* of the Gospels, have led the Church to come to the aid of readers by helping them overcome their perplexity. "Many Christians need to learn how to read the Gospels", notes Father Roguet. Whether or not one agrees with the explanations he gives, it is greatly to the author's credit that he actually tackles these delicate problems. Unfortunately, it is not always like this in many writings on the Christian Revelation.

In editions of the Bible produced for widespread publication, introductory notes more often than not set out a collection of ideas that would tend to persuade the reader that the Gospels hardly raise any problems concerning the personalities of the authors of the various books, the authenticity of the texts and the truth of the descriptions. In spite of the fact that there are so many unknowns concerning authors of whose identity we are not at all sure, we find a wealth of precise information in this kind of introductory note. Often they present as a certainty what is

pure hypothesis, or they state that such-and-such an evangelist was an eye-witness of the events, while specialist works claim the opposite. The time that elapsed between the end of Jesus' ministry and the appearance of the texts is drastically reduced. They would have one believe that these were written by one man taken from an oral tradition, when in fact specialists have pointed out adaptations to the texts. Of course, certain difficulties of interpretation are mentioned here and there, but they ride rough shod over glaring contradictions that must strike anyone who thinks about them. In the little glossaries one finds among the appendices complementing a reassuring preface, one observes how improbabilities, contradictions or blatant errors have been hidden or stifled under clever arguments of an apologetic nature. This disturbing state of affairs shows up the misleading nature of such commentaries.

The ideas to be developed in the coming pages will without doubt leave any readers still unaware of these problems quite amazed. Before going into detail however, I will provide an immediate illustration of my ideas with an example that seems to me quite conclusive.

Neither Matthew nor John speaks of Jesus's Ascension. Luke in his Gospel places it on the day of the Resurrection and forty days later in the Acts of the Apostles of which he is said to be the author. Mark mentions it (without giving a date) in a conclusion considered unauthentic today. The Ascension therefore has no solid scriptural basis. Commentators nevertheless approach this important question with incredible lightness.

A. Tricot, in his *Little Dictionary of the New Testament* (Petit Dictionnaire du Nouveau Testament) in the Crampon Bible, (1960 edition)[18], a work produced for mass publication, does not devote an entry to the Ascension. *The Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (Synopse des Quatre Evangiles) by Fathers Benoît and Boismard, teachers at the Biblical School of Jerusalem, (1972 edition)[19], informs us in volume II, pages 451 and 452, that the contradiction between Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles may be explained by a 'literary artifice': this is, to say the least, difficult to follow ! .

In all probability, Father Roguet in his *Initiation to the Gospel*, 1973, (pg. 187) has not been convinced by the above argument. The explanation he gives us is curious, to say the least:

"Here, as in many similar cases, the problem only appears insuperable if one takes Biblical statements literally, and forgets their religious significance. It is not a matter of breaking down the factual reality into a symbolism which is inconsistent, but rather of looking for the theological intentions of those revealing these mysteries to us by providing us with facts we can apprehend with our senses and signs appropriate to our incarnate spirit."

How is it possible to be satisfied by an exegesis of this kind. Only a person who accepted everything unconditionally would find such apologetic set-phrases acceptable.

Another interesting aspect of Father Roguet's commentary is his admission that there are 'many similar cases'; similar, that is, to the Ascension in the Gospels. The problem therefore has to be approached as a whole, objectively and in depth. It would seem reasonable to look for an explanation by studying the conditions attendant upon the writing of the Gospels, or the religious atmosphere prevailing at the time. When adaptations of the original writings taken from oral

traditions are pointed out, and we see the way texts handed down to us have been corrupted, the presence of obscure, incomprehensible, contradictory, improbable, and even absurd passages comes as much less of a surprise. The same may be said of texts which are incompatible with today's proven reality, thanks to scientific progress. Observations such as these denote the element of human participation in the writing and modification of the texts.

Admittedly, in the last few decades, objective research on the Scriptures has gained attention. In a recent book, *Faith in the Resurrection, Resurrection of Faith*[20] (Foi en la Resurrection, Resurrection de la foi), Father Kannengiesser, a professor at the Catholic Institute of Paris, outlines this profound change in the following terms: "The faithful are hardly aware that a revolution has taken place in methods of Biblical exegesis since the time of Pious XII"[21]. The 'Revolution' that the author mentions is therefore very recent. It is beginning to be extended to the teaching of the faithful, in the case of certain specialists at least, who are animated by this spirit of revival. "The overthrow of the most assured prospects of the pastoral tradition," the author writes, "has more or less begun with this revolution in methods of exegesis."

Father Kannengiesser warns that 'one should not take literally' facts reported about Jesus by the Gospels, because they are 'writings suited to an occasion' or 'to combat', whose authors 'are writing down the traditions of their own community about Jesus'. Concerning the Resurrection of Jesus, which is the subject of his book, he stresses that none of the authors of the Gospels can claim to have been an eye-witness. He intimates that, as far as the rest of Jesus's public life is concerned, the same must be true because, according to the Gospels, none of the Apostles-apart from Judas Iscariot-left Jesus from the moment he first followed Him until His last earthly manifestations.

We have come a long way from the traditional position, which was once again solemnly confirmed by the Second Vatican Council only ten years ago. This once again is resumed by modern works of popularization destined to be read by the faithful. Little by little the truth is coming to light however.

It is not easy to grasp, because the weight of such a bitterly defended tradition is very heavy indeed. To free oneself from it, one has to strike at the roots of the problem, i.e. examine first the circumstances that marked the birth of Christianity.

Historical Reminder Judeo-Christian and Saint Paul

The majority of Christians believe that the Gospels were written by direct witnesses of the life of Jesus and therefore constitute unquestionable evidence concerning the events highlighting His life and preachings. One wonders, in the presence of such guarantees of authenticity, how it is possible to discuss the teachings derived from them and how one can cast doubt upon the validity of the Church as an institution applying the general instructions Jesus Himself gave. Today's popular editions of the Gospels contain commentaries aimed at propagating these ideas among the general public.

The value the authors of the Gospels have as eye-witnesses is always presented to the faithful as axiomatic. In the middle of the Second century, Saint Justin did, after all, call the Gospels the 'Memoirs of the Apostles'. There are moreover so many details proclaimed concerning the authors that it is a wonder that one could ever doubt their accuracy. 'Matthew was a well-known character a customs officer employed at the tollgate or customs house at Capharnaum'; it is even said that he spoke Aramaic and Greek. Mark is also easily identifiable as Peter's colleague; there is no doubt that he too was an eye-witness. Luke is the 'dear physician' of whom Paul talks: information on him is very precise. John is the Apostle who was always near to Jesus, son of Zebedee, fisherman on the Sea of Galilee.

Modern studies on the beginnings of Christianity show that this way of presenting things hardly corresponds to reality. We shall see who the authors of the Gospels really were. As far as the decades following Jesus's mission are concerned, it must be understood that events did not at all happen in the way they have been said to have taken place and that Peter's arrival in Rome in no way laid the foundations for the Church. On the contrary, from the time Jesus left earth to the second half of the Second century, there was a struggle between two factions. One was what one might call Pauline Christianity and the other Judeo-Christianity. It was only very slowly that the first supplanted the second, and Pauline Christianity triumphed over Judeo-Christianity.

A large number of very recent works are based on contemporary discoveries about Christianity. Among them we find Cardinal Daniélou's name. In December 1967 he published an article in the review *Studies (Etudes)* entitled. '*A New Representation of the Origins of Christianity: Judeo-Christianity*'. (Une vision nouvelle des origines chrétiennes, le judéo-christianisme). Here he reviews past works, retraces its history and enables us to place the appearance of the Gospels in quite a different context from the one that emerges on reading accounts intended for mass publication. What follows is a condensed version of the essential points made in his article, including many quotations from it.

After Jesus's departure, the "little group of Apostles" formed a "Jewish sect that remained faithful to the form of worship practised in the Temple". However, when the observances of converts from paganism were added to them, a 'special system' was offered to them, as it were: the Council of Jerusalem in 49 A.D. exempted them from circumcision and Jewish observances; "many Judeo-Christians rejected this concession". This group was quite separate from Paul's. What is more, Paul and the Judeo-Christians were in conflict over the question of pagans who had turned to Christianity, (the incident of Antioch, 49 A.D.). "For Paul, the circumcision, Sabbath, and form of worship practised in the Temple were henceforth old fashioned, even for the Jews. Christianity was to free itself from its political-cum-religious adherence to Judaism and open itself to the Gentiles."

For those Judeo-Christians who remained 'loyal Jews,' Paul was a traitor. Judeo-Christian documents call him an 'enemy', accuse him of 'tactical double-dealing', . . . "Until 70 A.D., Judeo-Christianity represents the majority of the Church" and "Paul remains an isolated case". The head of the community at that time was James, a relation of Jesus. With him were Peter (at the beginning) and John. "James may be considered to represent the Judeo-Christian camp, which deliberately clung to Judaism as opposed to Pauline Christianity." Jesus's family has a very important place in the Judeo-Christian Church of Jerusalem. "James's successor was Simeon, son of Cleopas, a cousin of the Lord".

Cardinal Daniélou here quotes Judeo-Christian writings which express the views on Jesus of this community which initially formed around the apostles: the Gospel of the Hebrews (coming from a Judeo-Christian community in Egypt), the writings of Clement: Homilies and Recognitions, 'Hypotyposeis', the Second Apocalypse of James, the Gospel of Thomas.[22] "It is to the Judeo-Christians that one must ascribe the oldest writings of Christian literature." Cardinal Daniélou mentions them in detail.

"It was not just in Jerusalem and Palestine that Judeo-Christianity predominated during the first hundred years of the Church. The Judeo-Christian mission seems everywhere to have developed before the Pauline mission. This is certainly the explanation of the fact that the letters of Paul allude to a conflict." They were the same adversaries he was to meet everywhere: in Galatia, Corinth, Colossae, Rome and Antioch.

The Syro-Palestinian coast from Gaza to Antioch was Judeo-Christian "as witnessed by the Acts of the Apostles and Clementine writings". In Asia Minor, the existence of Judeo-Christians is indicated in Paul's letters to the Galatians and Colossians. Papias's writings give us information about Judeo-Christianity in Phrygia. In Greece, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians mentions Judeo-Christians, especially at Apollos. According to Clement's letter and the Shepherd of Hermas, Rome was an 'important centre'. For Suetonius and Tacitus, the Christians represented a Jewish sect. Cardinal Daniélou thinks that the first evangelization in Africa was Judeo-Christian. The Gospel of the Hebrews and the writings of Clement of Alexandria link up with this.

It is essential to know these facts to understand the struggle between communities that formed the background against which the Gospels were written. The texts that we have today, after many adaptations from the sources, began to appear around 70 A.D., the time when the two rival communities were engaged in a fierce struggle, with the Judeo-Christians still retaining the upper hand. With the Jewish war and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the situation was to be reversed. This is how Cardinal Daniélou explains the decline:

"After the Jews had been discredited in the Empire, the Christians tended to detach themselves from them. The Hellenistic peoples of Christian persuasion then gained the upper hand. Paul won a posthumous victory. Christianity separated itself politically and sociologically from Judaism; it became the third people. All the same, until the Jewish revolt in 140 A.D., Judeo-Christianity continued to predominate culturally"

From 70 A.D. to a period sometime before 110 A.D. the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John were produced. They do not constitute the first written Christian documents: the letters of

Paul date from well before them. According to O. Culmann, Paul probably wrote his letter to the Thessalonians in 50 A.D. He had probably disappeared several years prior to the completion of Mark's Gospel.

Paul is the most controversial figure in Christianity. He was considered to be a traitor to Jesus's thought by the latter's family and by the apostles who had stayed in Jerusalem in the circle around James. Paul created Christianity at the expense of those whom Jesus had gathered around him to spread his teachings. He had not known Jesus during his lifetime and he proved the legitimacy of his mission by declaring that Jesus, raised from the dead, had appeared to him on the road to Damascus. It is quite reasonable to ask what Christianity might have been without Paul and one could no doubt construct all sorts of hypotheses on this subject. As far as the Gospels are concerned however, it is almost certain that if this atmosphere of struggle between communities had not existed, we would not have had the writings we possess today. They appeared at a time of fierce struggle between the two communities. These 'combat writings', as Father Kannengiesser calls them, emerged from the multitude of writings on Jesus. These occurred at the time when Paul's style of Christianity won through definitively, and created its own collection of official texts. These texts constituted the 'Canon' which condemned and excluded as unorthodox any other documents that were not suited to the line adopted by the Church.

The Judeo-Christians have now disappeared as a community with any influence, but one still hears people talking about them under the general term of 'Judaistic'. This is how Cardinal Daniélou describes their disappearance:

"When they were cut off -from the Great Church, that gradually freed itself from its Jewish attachments, they petered out very quickly in the West. In the East however it is possible to find traces of them in the Third and Fourth Centuries A.D., especially in Palestine, Arabia, Transjordan, Syria and Mesopotamia. Others joined in the orthodoxy of the Great Church, at the same time preserving traces of Semitic culture; some of these still persist in the Churches of Ethiopia and Chaldea".

The Four Gospels. Sources and History.

In the writings that come from the early stages of Christianity, the Gospels are not mentioned until long after the works of Paul. It was not until the middle of the Second century A.D., after 140 A.D. to be precise, that accounts began to appear concerning a collection of Evangelic

writings, In spite of this, "from the beginning of the Second century A.D., many Christian authors clearly intimate that they knew a great many of Paul's letters." These observations are set out in the Introduction to the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible, New Testament* (Introduction à la Traduction oecuménique de la Bible, Nouveau Testament) edited 1972[23]. They are worth mentioning from the outset, and it is useful to point out here that the work referred to is the result of a collective effort which brought together more than one hundred Catholic and Protestant specialists.

The Gospels, later to become official, i.e. canonic, did not become known until fairly late, even though they were completed at the beginning of the Second century A.D. According to the *Ecumenical Translation*, stories belonging to them began to be quoted around the middle of the Second century A.D. Nevertheless, "it is nearly always difficult to decide whether the quotations come from written texts that the authors had next to them or if the latter were content to evoke the memory of fragments of the oral tradition."

"Before 140 A.D." we read in the commentaries this translation of the Bible contains, "there was, in any case, no account by which one might have recognised a collection of evangelic writings". This statement is the opposite of what A. Tricot writes (1960) in the commentary to his translation of the New Testament: "Very early on, from the beginning of the Second century A.D., it became a habit to say 'Gospel' meaning the books that Saint Justin around 150 A.D. had also called 'The Memoirs of the Apostles'." Unfortunately, assertions of this kind are sufficiently common for the public to have ideas on the date of the Gospels which are mistaken.

The Gospels did not form a complete whole 'very early on'; it did not happen until more than a century after the end of Jesus's mission. *The Ecumenical Translation of the Bible* estimates the date the four Gospels acquired the status of canonic literature at around 170 A.D.

Justin's statement which calls the authors 'Apostles' is not acceptable either, as we shall see.

As far as the date the Gospels were written is concerned, A. Tricot states that Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's Gospels were written before 70 A.D.: but this is not acceptable, except perhaps for Mark. Following many others, this commentator goes out of his way to present the authors of the Gospels as the apostles or the companions of Jesus. For this reason he suggests dates of writing that place them very near to the time Jesus lived. As for John, whom A. Tricot has us believe lived until roughly 100 A.D., Christians have always been used to seeing him depicted as being very near to Jesus on ceremonial occasions. It is very difficult however to assert that he is the author of the Gospel that bears his name. For A. Tricot, as for other commentators, the Apostle John (like Matthew) was the officially qualified witness of the facts he recounts, although the majority of critics do not support the hypothesis which says he wrote the fourth Gospel.

If however the four Gospels in question cannot reasonably be regarded as the 'Memoirs' of the apostles or companions of Jesus, where do they come from?

24. Pub. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1967

Culmann, in his book *The New Testament* (Le Nouveau Testament)[24], says of this that the evangelists were only the "spokesmen of the early Christian community which wrote down the oral tradition. For thirty or forty years, the Gospel had existed as an almost exclusively oral tradition: the latter only transmitted sayings and isolated narratives. The evangelists strung them together, each in his own way according to his own character and theological preoccupations. They linked up the narrations and sayings handed down by the prevailing tradition. The grouping of Jesus's sayings and likewise the sequence of narratives is made by the use of fairly vague linking phrases such as 'after this', 'when he had' etc. In other words, the 'framework' of the Synoptic Gospels[25] is of a purely literary order and is not based on history."

The same author continues as follows:

"It must be noted that the needs of preaching, worship and teaching, more than biographical considerations, were what guided the early community when it wrote down the tradition of the life of Jesus. The apostles illustrated the truth of the faith they were preaching by describing the events in the life of Jesus. Their sermons are what caused the descriptions to be written down. The sayings of Jesus were transmitted, in particular, in the teaching of the catechism of the early Church."

This is exactly how the commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible* (Traduction oecuménique de la Bible) describe the writing of the Gospels: the formation of an oral tradition influenced by the preachings of Jesus's disciples and other preachers; the preservation by preaching of this material, which is in actual fact found in the Gospels, by preaching, liturgy, and teaching of the faithful; the slender possibility of a concrete form given by writings to certain confessions of faith, sayings of Jesus, descriptions of the Passion for example; the fact that the evangelists resort to various written forms as well as data contained in the oral tradition. They resort to these to produce texts which "are suitable for various circles, which meet the needs of the Church, explain observations on the Scriptures, correct errors and even, on occasion, answer adversaries' objections. Thus the evangelists, each according to his own outlook, have collected and recorded in writing the material given to them by the oral tradition".

This position has been collectively adopted by more than one hundred experts in the exegesis of the New Testament, both Catholic and Protestant. It diverges widely from the line established by the Second Vatican Council in its dogmatic constitution on the Revelation drawn up between 1962 and 1965. This conciliar document has already been referred to once above, when talking of the Old Testament. The Council was able to declare of the latter that the books which compose it "contain material which is imperfect and obsolete", but it has not expressed the same reservations about the Gospels. On the contrary, as we read in the following.

"Nobody can overlook the fact that, among all the Scriptures, even those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a well-deserved position of superiority. This is by virtue of the fact that they represent the most pre-eminent witness to the life and teachings of the Incarnate Word, Our Saviour. At all times and in all places the Church has maintained and still maintains the apostolic origin of the four Gospels. What the apostles actually preached on Christ's orders, both they and the men in their following subsequently transmitted, with the divine inspiration of the Spirit, in

writings which are the foundation of the faith, i.e. the fourfold Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John."

"Our Holy Mother, the Church, has firmly maintained and still maintains with the greatest constancy, that these four Gospels, which it unhesitatingly confirms are historically authentic, faithfully transmit what Jesus, Son Of God, actually did and taught during his life among men for their eternal salvation until the day when He was taken up into the heavens. . . . The sacred authors therefore composed the four Gospels in such a way as to always give us true and frank information on the life of Jesus".

This is an unambiguous affirmation of the fidelity with which the Gospels transmit the acts and sayings of Jesus.

There is hardly any compatibility between the Council's affirmation and what the authors quoted above claim. In particular the following:

The Gospels "*are not to be taken literally*" they are "*writings suited to an occasion*" or "*combat writings*". Their authors "*are writing down the traditions of their own community concerning Jesus*". (Father Kannengiesser).

The Gospels are texts which "are suitable for various circles, meet the needs of the Church, explain observations on the Scriptures, correct errors and even, on occasion, answer adversaries' objections. Thus, the evangelists, each according to his own outlook, have collected and recorded in writing the material given to them by the oral tradition". (*Ecumenical Translation of the Bible*).

It is quite clear that we are here faced with contradictory statements: the declaration of the Council on the one hand, and more recently adopted attitudes on the other. According to the declaration of the Second Vatican Council, a faithful account of the actions and words of Jesus is to be found in the Gospels; but it is impossible to reconcile this with the existence in the text of contradictions, improbabilities, things which are materially impossible or statements which run contrary to firmly established reality.

If, on the other hand, one chooses to regard the Gospels as expressing the personal point of view of those who collected the oral traditions that belonged to various communities, or as writings suited to an occasion or combat-writings, it does not come as a surprise to find faults in the Gospels. All these faults are the sign that they were written by men in circumstances such as these. The writers may have been quite sincere, even though they relate facts without doubting their inaccuracy. They provide us with descriptions which contradict other authors' narrations, or are influenced by reasons of religious rivalry between communities. They therefore present stories about the life of Jesus from a completely different angle than their adversaries.

It has already been shown how the historical context is in harmony with the second approach to the Gospels. The data we have on the texts themselves definitively confirms it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Matthew's is the first of the four Gospels as they appear in the New Testament. This position is perfectly justified by the fact that it is a prolongation, as it were, of the Old Testament. It was written to show that "Jesus fulfilled the history of Israel", as the commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible* note and on which we shall be drawing heavily. To do BO, Matthew constantly refers to quotations from the Old Testament which show how Jesus acted as if he were the Messiah the Jews were awaiting.

This Gospel begins with a genealogy of Jesus[26]. Matthew traces it back to Abraham via David. We shall presently see the fault in the text that most commentators silently ignore. Matthew's obvious intention was nevertheless to indicate the general tenor of his work straight away by establishing this line of descendants. The author continues the same line of thought by constantly bringing to the forefront Jesus's attitude toward Jewish law, the main principles of which (praying, fasting, and dispensing charity) are summarized here.

Jesus addresses His teachings first and foremost to His own people. This is how He speaks to the twelve Apostles "go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans[27] but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10, 5-6). "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". (Matthew 15, 24). At the end of his Gospel, in second place, Matthew extends the apostolic mission of Jesus's first disciples to all nations. He makes Jesus give the following order. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28, 19), but the primary destination must be the 'house of Israel'. A.

Tricot says of this Gospel, "Beneath its Greek garb, the flesh and bones of this book are Jewish, and so is its spirit; it has a Jewish feel and bears its distinctive signs".

On the basis of these observations alone, the origins of Matthew's Gospel may be placed in the tradition of a Judeo-Christian community. According to O. Culmann, this community "was trying to break away from Judaism while at the same time preserving the continuity of the Old Testament. The main preoccupations and the general tenor of this Gospel point towards a strained situation."

There are also political factors to be found in the text. The Roman occupation of Palestine naturally heightened the desire of this country to see itself liberated. They prayed for God to intervene in favour of the people He had chosen among all others, and as their omnipotent sovereign who could give direct support to the affairs of men, as He had already done many times in the course of history.

What sort of person was Matthew? Let us say straight away that he is no longer acknowledged to be one of Jesus's companions. A. Tricot nevertheless presents him as such in his commentary to the translation of the New Testament, 1960: "Matthew alias, Levi, was a customs officer employed at the tollgate or customs house at Capharnaum when Jesus called him to be one of His disciples." This is the opinion of the Fathers of the Church, Origen, Jerome and Epiphane. This opinion is no longer held today. One point which is uncontested is that the author is writing "for people who speak Greek, but nevertheless know Jewish customs and the Aramaic language."

It would seem that for the commentators of the Ecumenical Translation, the origins of this Gospel are as follows:

"It is normally considered to have been written in Syria, perhaps at Antioch (. . .), or in Phoenicia, because a great many Jews lived in these countries.[28] (. . .) we have indications of a polemic against the orthodox Judaism of the Synagogue and the Pharisees such as was manifested at the synagogal assembly at Jamina circa 80 A.D." In such conditions, there are many authors who date the first of the Gospels at about 80-90 A.D., perhaps also a little earlier. it is not possible to be absolutely definite about this . . . since we do not know the author's exact name, we must be satisfied with a few outlines traced in the Gospel itself. the author can be recognized by his profession. He is well-versed in Jewish writings and traditions. He knows, respects, but vigorously challenges the religious leaders of his people. He is a past master in the art of teaching and making Jesus understandable to his listeners. He always insists on the practical consequences of his teachings. He would fit fairly well the description of an educated Jew turned Christian; a householder "who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" as Matthew says (13,52). This is a long way from the civil servant at Capharnaum, whom Mark and Luke call Levi, and who had become one of the twelve Apostles . . .

Everyone agrees in thinking that Matthew wrote his Gospel using the same sources as Mark and Luke. His narration is, as we shall see, different on several essential points. In spite of this, Matthew borrowed heavily from Mark's Gospel although the latter was not one of Jesus's disciples (O. Culmann).

Matthew takes very serious liberties with the text. We shall see this when we discuss the Old Testament in relation to the genealogy of Jesus which is placed at the beginning of his Gospel.

He inserts into his book descriptions which are quite literally incredible. This is the adjective used in the work mentioned above by Father Kannengiesser referring to an episode in the Resurrection. the episode of the guard. He points out the improbability of the story referring to military guards at the tomb, "these Gentile soldiers" who "report, not to their hierarchical superiors, but to the high priests who pay them to tell lies". He adds however: "One must not laugh at him because Matthew's intention was extremely serious. In his own way he incorporates ancient data from the oral tradition into his written work. The scenario is nevertheless worthy of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.[29]"

Let us not forget that this opinion on Matthew comes from an eminent theologian teaching at the Catholic Institute of Paris (Institut Catholique de Paris).

Matthew relates in his narration the events accompanying the death of Jesus. They are another example of his imagination.

"And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many."

This passage from Matthew (27, 51-53) has no corresponding passage in the other Gospels. It is difficult to see how the bodies of the saints in question could have raised from the dead *at the time of Jesus's death* (according to the Gospels it was on the eve of the Sabbath) and only emerge from their tombs *after his resurrection* (according to the same sources on the day after the Sabbath).

The most notable improbability is perhaps to be found in Matthew. It is the most difficult to rationalize of all that the Gospel authors claim Jesus said. He relates in chapter 12, 38-40 the episode concerning Jonah's sign:

Jesus was among the scribes and pharisees who addressed him in the following terms:

"Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you. But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Jesus therefore proclaims that he will stay in the earth three days and three nights. So Matthew, along with Luke and Mark, place the death and burial of Jesus on the eve of the Sabbath. This, of course, makes the time spent in the earth three days (*treis êmeras* in the Greek text), but this period can only include two and not three nights (*treis nuktas* in the Greek text[30]).

Gospel commentators frequently ignore this episode. Father Roguet nevertheless points out this improbability when he notes that Jesus "only stayed in the tomb" three days (one of them complete) and two nights. He adds however that "it is a set expression and really means three days". It is disturbing to see commentators reduced to using arguments that do not contain any positive meaning. It would be much more satisfying intellectually to say that a gross error such as this was the result of a scribe's mistake!

Apart from these improbabilities, what mostly distinguishes Matthew's Gospel is that it is the work of a Judeo-Christian community in the process of breaking away from Judaism while remaining in line with the Old Testament. From the point of view of Judeo-Christian history it is very important.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

This is the shortest of the four Gospels. It is also the oldest, but in spite of this it is not a book written by an apostle. At best it was written by an apostle's disciple.

O. Culmann has written that he does not consider Mark to be a disciple of Jesus. The author nevertheless points out, to those who have misgivings about the ascription of this Gospel to the Apostle Mark, that "Matthew and Luke would not have used this Gospel in the way they did had they not known that it was indeed based on the teachings of an apostle". This argument is in no way decisive. O. Culmann backs up the reservations he expresses by saying that he frequently quotes from the New Testament the sayings of a certain 'John nicknamed Mark'. These

quotations. do not however mention the name of a Gospel author, and the text of Mark itself does not name any author.

The paucity of information on this point has led commentators to dwell on details that seem rather extravagant: using the pretext, for example, that Mark was the only evangelist to relate in his description of the Passion the story of the young man who had nothing but a linen cloth about his body and, when seized, left the linen cloth and ran away naked (Mark 14, 51-52), they conclude that the young man must have been Mark, "the faithful disciple who tried to follow the teacher" (Ecumenical Translation). Other commentators see in this "personal memory a sign of authenticity, an anonymous signature", which "proves that he was an eyewitness" (O. Culmann).

O. Culmann considers that "many turns of phrase corroborate the hypothesis that the author was of Jewish origin," but the presence of Latin expressions might suggest that he had written his Gospel in Rome. "He addresses himself moreover to Christians not living in Palestine and is careful to explain the Aramic expressions he uses."

Tradition has indeed tended to see Mark as Peter's companion in Rome. It is founded on the final section of Peter's first letter (always supposing that he was indeed the author) . Peter wrote in his letter. "The community which is at Babylon, which is likewise chosen, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark." "By Babylon, what is probably meant is Rome" we read in the commentary to the Ecumenical Translation. From this, the commentators then imagine themselves authorized to conclude that Mark, who was supposed to have been with Peter in Rome, was the Evangelist . . . One wonders whether it was not the same line of reasoning that led Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in circa 150 A.D., to ascribe this Gospel to Mark as 'Peter's interpreter' and the possible collaborator of Paul.

Seen from this point of view, the composition of Mark's Gospel could be placed after Peter's death, i.e. at between 65 and 70 A.D. for the Ecumenical Translation and circa 70 A.D. for O. Culmann.

The text itself unquestionably reveals a major flaw. it is written with a total disregard to chronology. Mark therefore places, at the beginning of his narration (1, 16-20), the episode of the four fishermen whom Jesus leads to follow him by simply saying "I will make you become fishers of men", though they do not even know Him. The evangelist shows, among other things, a complete lack of plausibility.

As Father Roguet has said, Mark is 'a clumsy writer', 'the weakest of all the evangelists'; he hardly knows how to write a narrative. The commentator reinforces his observation by quoting a passage about how the twelve Apostles were selected.

Here is the literal translation:

"And he went up into the hills, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he made that the twelve were to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority

to cast out demons; and he made the twelve and imposed the name Simon on Peter" (Mark, 3, 13-16).

He contradicts Matthew and Luke, as has already been noted above, with regard to the sign of Jonah. On the subject of signs given by Jesus to men in the course of His mission Mark (8, 11-13) describes an episode that is hardly credible:

"The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, 'Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.' And he left them, and getting into the boat again he departed to the other side."

There can be no doubt that this is an affirmation coming from Jesus Himself about his intention not to commit any act which might appear supernatural. Therefore the commentators of the Ecumenical Translation, who are surprised that Luke says Jesus will only give one sign (the sign of Jonah; see Matthew's Gospel) , consider it 'paradoxical' that Mark should say "no sign shall be given to this generation" seeing, as they note, the "miracles that Jesus himself gives as a sign" (Luke 7,22 and 11,20).

Mark's Gospel as a whole is officially recognised as being canonic. All the same, the final section of Mark's Gospel (16,19-20) is considered by modern authors to have been tacked on to the basic work: the Ecumenical Translation is quite explicit about this.

This final section is not contained in the two oldest complete manuscripts of the Gospels, the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus* that date from the Fourth century A.D. O. Culmann notes on this subject that: "More recent Greek manuscripts and certain versions at this point added a conclusion on appearances which is not drawn from Mark but from the other Gospels." In fact, the versions of this added ending are very numerous. In the texts there are long and short versions (both are reproduced in the Bible, Revised Standard Version, 1952). Sometimes the long version has some additional material.

Father Kannengiesser makes the following comments on the ending. "The last verses must have been suppressed when his work was officially received (or the popular version of it) in the community that guaranteed its validity. Neither Matthew, Luke or a *fortiori* John saw the missing section. Nevertheless, the gap was unacceptable. A long time afterwards, when the writings of Matthew, Luke and John, all of them similar, had been in circulation, a worthy ending to Mark was composed. Its elements were taken from sources throughout the other Gospels. It would be easy to recognise the pieces of the puzzle by enumerating Mark (16,9-20). One would gain a more concrete idea of the free way in which the literary genre of the evangelic narration was handled until the beginnings of the Second century A.D."

What a blunt admission is provided for us here, in the thoughts of a great theologian, that human manipulation exists in the texts of the Scriptures!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

For O. Culmann, Luke is a 'chronicler', and for Father Kannengiesser he is a 'true novelist'. In his prologue to Theophilus, Luke warns us that he, in his turn, following on from others who have written accounts concerning Jesus, is going to write a narrative of the same facts using the accounts and information of eyewitnesses-implying that he himself is not one-including information from the apostles' preachings. It is therefore to be a methodical piece of work which he introduces in the following terms:

"Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having informed myself about all things from their beginnings, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning things of which you have been informed."

From the very first line one can see all that separates Luke from the 'scribbler' Mark to whose work we have just referred. Luke's Gospel is incontestably a literary work written in classical Greek free from any barbarisms.

Luke was a cultivated Gentile convert to Christianity. His attitude towards the Jews is immediately apparent. As O. Culmann points out, Luke leaves out Mark's most Judaic verses and highlights the Jews' incredulity at Jesus's words, throwing into relief his good relations with the Samaritans, whom the Jews detested. Matthew, on the other hand, has Jesus ask the apostles to flee from them. This is just one of many striking examples of the fact that the evangelists make Jesus say whatever suits their own personal outlook. They probably do so with sincere conviction. They give us the version of Jesus's words that is adapted to the point of view of their own community. How can one deny in the face of such evidence that the Gospels are 'combat writings' or 'writings suited to an occasion', as has been mentioned already? The comparison between the general tone of Luke's Gospel and Matthew's is in this respect a good demonstration.

Who was Luke? An attempt has been made to identify him with the physician of the same name referred to by Paul in several of his letters. The Ecumenical Translation notes that "several commentators have found the medical occupation of the author of this Gospel confirmed by the precision with which he describes the sick". This assessment is in fact exaggerated out of all proportion. Luke does not properly speaking 'describe' things of this kind; "the vocabulary he uses is that of a cultivated man of his time". There was a Luke who was Paul's travelling companion, but was he the same person? O. Culmann thinks he was.

The date of Luke's Gospel can be estimated according to several factors: Luke used Mark's and Matthew's Gospels. From what we read in the Ecumenical Translation, it seems that he witnessed the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus's armies in 70 A.D. The Gospel probably dates from after this time. Present-day critics situate the time it was written at .circa 80-90 A.D., but several place it at an even earlier date.

The various narrations in Luke show important differences when compared to his predecessors. An outline of this has already been given. The Ecumenical Translation indicates them on pages 181 et seq. O. Culmann, in his book, *The New Testament* (Le Nouveau Testament) page 18, cites

descriptions in Luke's Gospel that are not to be found anywhere else. And they are not about minor points of detail.

The descriptions of Jesus's childhood are unique to Luke's Gospel. Matthew describes Jesus's childhood differently from Luke, and Mark does not mention it at all.

Matthew and Luke both provide different genealogies of Jesus: the contradictions are so large and the improbabilities so great, from a scientific point of view, that a special chapter of this book has been devoted to the subject. It is possible to explain why Matthew, who was addressing himself to Jews, should begin the genealogy at Abraham, and include David in it, and that Luke, as a converted Gentile, should want to go back even farther. We shall see however that the two genealogies contradict each other from David onwards.

Jesus's mission is described differently on many points by Luke, Matthew and Mark.

An event of such great importance to Christians as the institution of the Eucharist gives rise to variations between Luke and the other two evangelists.[31] Father Roguet notes in his book *Initiation to the Gospel* (Initiation à l'Evangile) page 75, that the words used to institute the Eucharist are reported by Luke (22,19-24) in a form very different from the wording in Matthew (26,26-29) and in Mark (14,22-24) which is almost identical.

"On the contrary" he writes, "the wording transmitted by Luke is very similar to that evoked by Saint Paul" (First Letter to the Corinthians, 11,23-25) .

As we have seen, in his Gospel, Luke expresses ideas on the subject of Jesus's Ascension which contradict what he says in the Acts of the Apostles. He is recognized as their author and they form an integral part of the New Testament. In his Gospel he situates the Ascension on Easter Day, and in the Acts forty days later. We already know to what strange commentaries this contradiction has led Christian experts in exegesis.

Commentators wishing to be objective, such as those of the Ecumenical Translation of the Bible, have been obliged to recognise as a general rule the fact that for Luke "the main preoccupation was not to write facts corresponding to material accuracy". When Father Kannengiesser compares the descriptions in the Acts of the Apostles written by Luke himself with the description of similar facts on Jesus raised from the dead by Paul, he pronounces the following opinion on Luke: "Luke is the most sensitive and literary of the four evangelists, he has all the qualities of a true novelist".

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

John's Gospel is radically different from the three others; to such an extent indeed that Father Roguet in his book *Initiation to the Gospel* (Initiation à l'Evangile), having commented on the other three, immediately evokes a startling image for the fourth. He calls it , different world'. It is indeed a unique book; different in the arrangement and choice of subject, description and speech; different in its style, geography, chronology; there are even differences in theological outlook (O.

Culmann). Jesus's words are therefore differently recorded by John from the other evangelists: Father Roguet notes on this that whereas the synoptics record Jesus's words in a style that is "striking, much nearer to the oral style", in John all is meditation; to such an extent indeed that "one sometimes wonders if Jesus is still speaking or whether His ideas have not imperceptibly been extended by the Evangelist's own thoughts".

Who was the author? This is a highly debated question and extremely varying opinions have been expressed on this subject.

A. Tricot and Father Roguet belong to a camp that does not have the slightest misgivings: John's Gospel is the work of an eyewitness, its author is John, son of Zebedee and brother of James. Many details are known about this apostle and are set out in works for mass publication. Popular iconography puts him near Jesus, as in the Last Supper prior to the Passion. Who could imagine that John's Gospel was not the work of John the Apostle whose figure is so familiar?

The fact that the fourth Gospel was written so late is not a serious argument against this opinion. The definitive version was probably written around the end of the First century A.D. To situate the time it was written at sixty years after Jesus would be in keeping with an apostle who was very young at the time of Jesus and who lived to be almost a hundred.

Father Kannengiesser, in his study on the Resurrection, arrives at the conclusion that none of the New Testament authors, save Paul, can claim to have been eyewitnesses to Jesus's Resurrection. John nevertheless related the appearance to a number of the assembled apostles, of which he was probably a member, in the absence of Thomas (20,19-24), then eight days later to the full group of apostles (20,25-29).

O. Culmann in his work *The New Testament* does not subscribe to this view.

The *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible* states that the majority of critics do not accept the hypothesis that the Gospel was written by John, although this possibility cannot be entirely ruled out. Everything points however towards the fact that the text we know today had several authors: "It is probable that the Gospel as it stands today was put into circulation by the author's disciples who added chapter 21 and very likely several annotations (i.e. 4,2 and perhaps 4,1; 4,44; 7,37b; 11,2; 19,35). With regard to the story of the adulterous woman (7,53-8,11), everyone agrees that it is a fragment of unknown origin inserted later (but nevertheless belonging to canonic Scripture)". Passage 19,35 appears as a 'signature' of an 'eyewitness' (O. Culmann), the only explicit signature in the whole of John's Gospel; but commentators believe that it was probably added later.

O. Culmann thinks that latter additions are obvious in this Gospel; such as chapter 21 which is probably the work of a "disciple who may well have made slight alterations to the main body of the Gospel".

It is not necessary to mention all the hypotheses suggested by experts in exegesis. The remarks recorded here made by the most eminent Christian writers on the questions of the authorship of

the fourth Gospel are sufficient to show the extent of the confusion reigning on the subject of its authorship.

The historical value of John's stories has been contested to a great extent. The discrepancy between them and the other three Gospels is quite blatant. O. Culman offers an explanation for this; he sees in John a different theological point of view from the other evangelists. This aim "directs the choice of stories from the Logia[32] recorded, as well as the way in which they are reproduced . . . Thus the author often prolongs the lines and makes the historical Jesus say what the Holy Spirit Itself revealed to Him". This, for the exegete in question, is the reason for the discrepancies.

It is of course quite conceivable that John, who was writing after the other evangelists, should have chosen certain stories suitable for illustrating his own theories. One should not be surprised by the fact that certain descriptions contained in the other Gospels are missing in John. The *Ecumenical Translation* picks out a certain number of such instances (page 282). Certain gaps hardly seem credible however, like the fact that the Institution of the Eucharist is not described. It is unthinkable that an episode so basic to Christianity, one indeed that was to be the mainstay of its liturgy, i.e. the mass, should not be mentioned by John, the most pre-eminently meditative evangelist. The fact is, he limits himself, in the narrative of the supper prior to the Passion, to simply describing the washing of the disciples' feet, the prediction of Judas's betrayal and Peter's denial.

In contrast to this, there are stories which are unique to John and not present in the other three. The *Ecumenical Translation* mentions these (page 283). Here again, one could infer that the three authors did not see the importance in these episodes that John saw in them. It is difficult however not to be taken aback when one finds in John a description of the appearance of Jesus *raised from the dead* to his disciples beside the Sea of Tiberias (John 21,1-14). The description is nothing less than the reproduction (with numerous added details) of the miracle catch of fish which Luke (5,1-11) presents as an episode that occurred *during Jesus's life*. In his description Luke alludes to the presence of the Apostle John who, as tradition has it, was the evangelist. Since this description in John's Gospel forms part of chapter 21, agreed to be a later addition, one can easily imagine that the reference to John's name in Luke could have led to its artificial inclusion in the fourth Gospel. The necessity of transforming a description from Jesus's life to a posthumous description in no way prevented the evangelical text from being manipulated.

Another important point on which John's Gospel differs from the other three is in the duration of Jesus's mission. Mark, Matthew and Luke place it over a period of one year. John spreads it over two years. O. Culmann notes this fact. On this subject the *Ecumenical Translation* expresses the following .

"The synoptics describe a long period in Galilee followed by a march that was more or less prolonged towards Judea, and finally a brief stay in Jerusalem. John, on the other hand, describes frequent journeys from one area to another and mentions a long stay in Judea, especially in Jerusalem (1,19-51; 2,13-3,36; 5,1-47; 14,20-31). He mentions several Passover celebrations (2,13; 5,1; 6,4; 11,55) and thus suggests a ministry that lasted more than two years".

Which one of them should one believe-Mark, Matthew, Luke or John?

SOURCES OF THE GOSPELS

The general outline that has been given here of the Gospels and which emerges from a critical examination of the texts tends to make one think of a literature which is "disjointed, with a plan that lacks continuity" and "seemingly insuperable contradictions". These are the terms used in the judgement passed on them by the commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible*. It is important to refer to their authority because the consequences of an appraisal of this subject are extremely serious. It has already been seen how a few notions concerning the religious history of the time when the Gospels were written helped to explain certain disconcerting aspects of this literature apparent to the thoughtful reader. It is necessary to continue, however, and ascertain what present-day works can tell us about the sources the Evangelists drew on when writing their texts. It is also interesting to see whether the history of the texts once they were established can help to explain certain aspects they present today.

The problem of sources was approached in a very simplistic fashion at the time of the Fathers of the Church. In the early centuries of Christianity, the only source available was the Gospel that the complete manuscripts provided first, i.e. Matthew's Gospel. The problem of sources only concerned Mark and Luke because John constituted a quite separate case. Saint Augustine held that Mark, who appears second in the traditional order of presentation, had been inspired by Matthew and had summarized his work. He further considered that Luke, who comes third in the manuscripts, had used data from both; his prologue suggests this, and has already been discussed.

The experts in exegesis at this period were as able as we are to estimate the degree of corroboration between the texts and find a large number of verses common to two or three synoptics. Today, the commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible* provide the following figures:

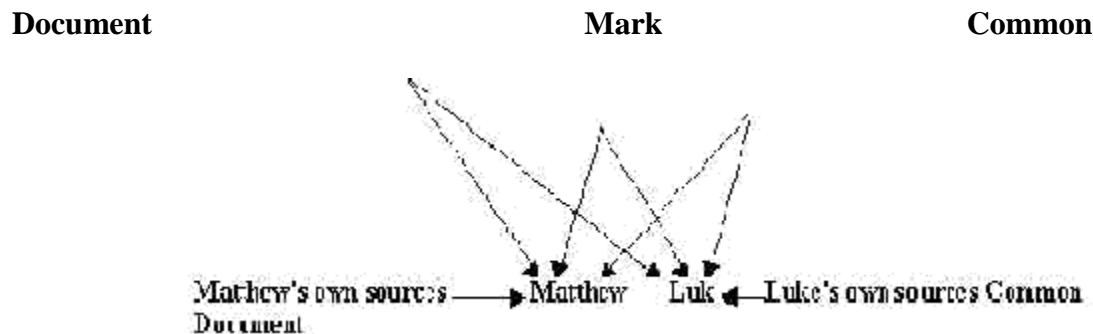
verses common to all three synoptics ----- 330
verses common to Mark and Matthew ----- 178
verses common to Mark and Luke -----100
verses common to Matthew and Luke ----- 230

The verses unique to each of the first three Gospels are as follows: Matthew 330, Mark 53, and Luke 500.

From the Fathers of the Church until the end of the Eighteenth century A.D., one and a half millenia passed without any new problems being raised on the sources of the evangelists: people continued to follow tradition. It was not until modern times that it was realized, on the basis of these data, how each evangelist had taken material found in the others and compiled his own specific narration guided by his own personal views. Great weight was attached to actual collection of material for the narration. It came from the oral traditions of the communities from which it originated on the one hand, and from a common written Aramaic source that has not

been rediscovered on the other. This written source could have formed a compact mass or have been composed of many fragments of different narrations used by each evangelist to construct his own original work.

More intensive studies in circa the last hundred years have led to theories which are more detailed and in time will become even more complicated. The first of the modern theories is the so-called 'Holtzmann Two Sources Theory', (1863). O. Culmann and the Ecumenical Translation explain that, according to this theory, Matthew and Luke may have been inspired by Mark on the one hand and on the other by a common document which has since been lost. The first two moreover each had his own sources. This leads to the following diagram:



Culmann criticises the above on the following points:

1. Mark's work, used by both Luke and Matthew, was probably not the author's Gospel but an earlier version.
2. The diagram does not lay enough emphasis on the oral tradition. This appears to be of paramount importance because it alone preserved Jesus's words and the descriptions of his mission during a period of thirty or forty years, as each of the Evangelists was only the spokesman for the Christian community which wrote down the oral tradition.

This is how it is possible to conclude that the Gospels we possess today are a reflection of what the early Christian communities knew of Jesus's life and ministry. They also mirror their beliefs and theological ideas, of which the evangelists were the spokesmen.

The latest studies in textual criticism on the sources of the Gospels have clearly shown an even more complicated formation process of the texts. A book by Fathers Benoit and Boismard, both professors at the Biblical School of Jerusalem (1972-1973), called the *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (Synopse des quatres Evangiles) stresses the evolution of the text in stages parallel to the evolution of the tradition. This implies the consequences set out by Father Benoit in his introduction to Father Boismard's part of the work. He presents them in the following terms:

"(. . .) the wording and form of description that result from a long evolution of tradition are not as authentic as in the original. some readers of this work will perhaps be surprised or embarrassed to learn that certain of Jesus's sayings, parables, or predictions of His destiny were not expressed in the way we read them today, but were altered and adapted

by those who transmitted them to us. This may come as a source of amazement and even scandal to those not used to this kind of historical investigation."

The alterations and adaptations to the texts made by those transmitting them to us were done in a way that Father Boismard explains by means of a highly complex diagram. It is a development of the so-called 'Two Sources Theory', and is the product of examination and comparison of the texts which it is not possible to summarize here. Those readers who are interested in obtaining further details should consult the original work published by Les Editions du Cerf, Paris.

Four basic documents-A, B, C and Q-represent the original sources of the Gospels (see general diagram). Page 76.

Document A comes from a Judeo-Christian source. Matthew and Mark were inspired by it.

Document B is a reinterpretation of document A, for use in Pagan-cum-Christian churches: all the evangelists were inspired by it except Matthew.

Document C inspired Mark, Luke and John.

Document Q constitutes the majority of sources common to Matthew and Luke; it is the 'Common Document' in the 'Two Sources' theory referred to earlier.

None of these basic documents led to the production of the definitive texts we know today. Between them and the final version lay the intermediate versions: Intermediate Matthew, Intermediate Mark, Intermediate Luke and Intermediate John. These four intermediate documents were to lead to the final versions of the four Gospels, as well as to inspire the final corresponding versions of other Gospels. One only has to consult the diagram to see the intricate relationships the author has revealed.

The results of this scriptural research are of great importance. They show how the Gospel texts not only have a history (to be discussed later) but also a 'pre-history', to use Father Boismard's expression. What is meant is that before the final versions appeared, they underwent alterations at the Intermediate Document stage. Thus it is possible to explain, for example, how a well-known story from Jesus's life, such as the miracle catch of fish, is shown in Luke to be an event that happened during His life, and in John to be one of His appearances after His Resurrection.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above is that when we read the Gospel, we can no longer be at all sure that we are reading Jesus's word. Father Benoit addresses himself to the readers of the Gospel by warning them and giving them the following compensation: "If the reader is obliged in more than one case to give up the notion of hearing Jesus's voice directly, he still hears the voice of the Church and he relies upon it as the divinely appointed interpreter of the Master who long ago spoke to us on earth and who now speaks to us in His glory".

How can one reconcile this formal statement of the inauthenticity of certain texts with the phrase used in the dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation by the Second Vatican Council assuring us to the contrary, i.e. the faithful transmission of Jesus's words: "These four Gospels, which it (the Church) unhesitatingly confirms are historically authentic, faithfully transmit what Jesus,

Son of God, actually did and taught during his life among men for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up into the heavens"?

It is quite clear that the work of the Biblical School of Jerusalem flatly contradicts the Council's declaration.

M. E. BOISMARD
SYNOPSIS OF THE FOUR GOSPELS[1]
GENERAL DIAGRAM
(1) Synopse des quatre Evangiles

HISTORY OF THE TEXTS

One would be mistaken in thinking that once the Gospels were written they constituted the basic Scriptures of the newly born Christianity and that people referred to them the same way they referred to the Old Testament. At that time, the foremost authority was the oral tradition as a vehicle for Jesus's words and the teachings of the apostles. The first writings to circulate were Paul's letters and they occupied a prevalent position long before the Gospels. They were, after all, written several decades earlier.

It has already been shown, that contrary to what certain commentators are still writing today, before 140 A.D. there was no witness to the knowledge that a collection of Gospel writings existed. It was not until circa 170 A.D. that the four Gospels acquired the status of canonic literature.

In the early days of Christianity, many writings on Jesus were in circulation. They were not subsequently retained as being worthy of authenticity and the Church ordered them to be hidden, hence their name 'Apocrypha'. Some of the texts of these works have been well preserved because they "benefitted from the fact that they were generally valued", to quote the Ecumenical Translation. The same was true for the Letter of Barnabas, but unfortunately others were "more brutally thrust aside" and only fragments of them remain. They were considered to be the messengers of error and were removed from the sight of the faithful. Works such as the Gospels of the Nazarenes, the Gospels of the Hebrews and the Gospels of the Egyptians, known through quotations taken from the Fathers of the Church, were nevertheless fairly closely related to the canonic Gospels. The same holds good for Thomas's Gospel and Barnabas's Gospel.

Some of these apocryphal writings contain imaginary details, the product of popular fantasy. Authors of works on the Apocrypha also quote with obvious satisfaction passages which are literally ridiculous. Passages such as these are however to be found in *all* the Gospels. One has only to think of the imaginary description of events that Matthew claims took place at Jesus's death. It is possible to find passages lacking seriousness in all the early writings of Christianity: One must be honest enough to admit this.

The abundance of literature concerning Jesus led the Church to make certain excisions while the latter was in the process of becoming organized. Perhaps a hundred Gospels were suppressed.

Only four were retained and put on the official list of neo-Testament writings making up what is called the 'Canon'.

In the middle of the Second century A.D., Marcion of Sinope put heavy pressure on the ecclesiastic authorities to take a stand on this. He was an ardent enemy of the Jews and at that time rejected the whole of the Old Testament and everything in writings produced after Jesus that seemed to him too close to the Old Testament or to come from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Marcion only acknowledged the value of Luke's Gospel because, he believed Luke to be the spokesman of Paul and his writings.

The Church declared Marcion a heretic and put into its canon all the Letters of Paul, but included the other Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They also added several other works such as the Acts of the Apostles. The official list nevertheless varies with time during the first centuries of Christianity. For a while, works that were later considered not to be valid (i.e. Apocrypha) figured in it, while other works contained in today's New Testament Canon were excluded from it at this time. These hesitations lasted until the Councils of Hippo Regius in 393 and Carthage in 397. The four Gospels always figured in it however.

One may join Father Boismard in regretting the disappearance of a vast quantity of literature declared apocryphal by the Church although it was of historical interest. The above author indeed gives it a place in his *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* alongside that of the official Gospels. He notes that these books still existed in libraries near the end of the Fourth century A.D.

This was the century that saw things put into serious order. The oldest manuscripts of the Gospels date from this period. Documents prior to this, i.e. papyri from the Third century A.D. and one possibly dating from the Second, only transmit fragments to us. The two oldest parchment manuscripts are Greek, Fourth century A.D. They are the *Codex Vaticanus*, preserved in the Vatican Library and whose place of discovery is unknown, and the *Codex Sinaiticus*, which was discovered on Mount Sinai and is now preserved in the British Museum, London. The second contains two apocryphal works.

According to the Ecumenical Translation, two hundred and fifty other known parchments exist throughout the world, the last of these being from the Eleventh century A.D. "Not all the copies of the New Testament that have come down to us are identical" however. "On the contrary, it is possible to distinguish differences of varying degrees of importance between them, but however important they may be, there is always a large number of them. Some of these only concern differences of grammatical detail, vocabulary or word order. Elsewhere however, differences between manuscripts can be seen which affect the meaning of whole passages". If one wishes to see the extent of textual differences, one only has to glance through the *Novum Testamentum Graece*.^[33] This work contains a so-called 'middle-of-the-road' Greek text. It is a text of synthesis with notes containing all the variations found in the different versions.

The authenticity of a text, and of even the most venerable manuscript, is always open to debate. The *Codex Vaticanus* is a good example of this. The facsimile reproductions edited by the Vatican City, 1965, contains an accompanying note from its editors informing us that "several centuries after it was copied (believed to have been in circa the Tenth or Eleventh century), a

scribe inked over all the letters except those he thought were a mistake". There are passages in the text where the original letters in light brown still show through, contrasting visibly with the rest of the text which is in dark brown. There is no indication that it was a faithful restoration. The note states moreover that "the different hands that corrected and annotated the manuscript over the centuries have not yet been definitively discerned; a certain number of corrections were undoubtedly made when the text was inked over." In all the religious manuals the text is presented as a Fourth century copy. One has to go to sources at the Vatican to discover that various hands may have altered the text centuries later.

One might reply that other texts may be used for comparison, but how does one choose between variations that change the meaning? It is a well known fact that a very old scribe's correction can lead to the definitive reproduction of the corrected text. We shall see further on how a single word in a passage from John concerning the Paraclete radically alters its meaning and completely changes its sense when viewed from a theological point of view.

O. Culmann, in his book, *The New Testament*, writes the following on the subject of variations:

"Sometimes the latter are the result of inadvertant flaws: the copier misses a word out, or conversely writes it twice, or a whole section of a sentence is carelessly omitted because in the manuscript to be copied it appeared between two identical words. Sometimes it is a matter of deliberate corrections, either the copier has taken the liberty of correcting the text according to his own ideas or he has tried to bring it into line with a parallel text in a more or less skilful attempt to reduce the number of discrepancies. As, little by little, the New Testament writings broke away from the rest of early Christian literature, and came to be regarded as Holy Scripture, so the copiers became more and more hesitant about taking the same liberties as their predecessors: they thought they were copying the authentic text, but in fact wrote down the variations. Finally, a copier sometimes wrote annotations in the margin to explain an obscure passage. The following copier, thinking that the sentence he found in the margin had been left out of the passage by his predecessor, thought it necessary to include the margin notes in the text. This process often made the new text even more obscure."

The scribes of some manuscripts sometimes took exceedingly great liberties with the texts. This is the case of one of the most venerable manuscripts after the two referred to above, the Sixth century *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis*. The scribe probably noticed the difference between Luke's and Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, so he put Matthew's genealogy into his copy of Luke, but as the second contained fewer names than the first, he padded it out with extra names (without balancing them up).

Is it possible to say that the Latin translations, such as Saint Jerome's Sixth century Vulgate, or older translations (*Vetus Itala*), or Syriac and Coptic translations are any more faithful than the basic Greek manuscripts? They might have been made from manuscripts older than the ones referred to above and subsequently lost to the present day. We just do not know.

It has been possible to group the bulk of these versions into families all bearing a certain number of common traits. According to O. Culmann, one can define:

--a so-called Syrian text, whose constitution could have led to the majority of the oldest Greek

manuscripts; this text was widely disseminated throughout Europe from the Sixteenth century A.D. onwards thanks to printing. the specialists say that it is probably the worst text.
--a so-called Western text, with old Latin versions and the *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis* which is in both Greek and Latin; according to the Ecumenical Translation, one of its characteristics is a definite tendency to provide explanations, paraphrases, inaccurate data and 'harmonizations'.
--the so-called Neutral text, containing the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus*, is said to have a fairly high level of purity; modern editions of the New Testament readily follow it, although it too has its flaws (Ecumenical Translation).

All that modern textual criticism can do in this respect is to try and reconstitute "a text which has the most likelihood of coming near to the original. In any case, there can be no hope of going back to the original text itself." (Ecumenical Translation)

The Gospels and Modern Science. The General Genealogies of Jesus.

The Gospels contain very few passages which give rise to a confrontation with modern scientific data.

Firstly however, there are many descriptions referring to miracles which hardly lend themselves to scientific comment. The miracles concern people-the healing of the sick (the insane, blind, paralytic ; the healing of lepers, resurrection of Lazarus) as well as the purely material phenomena that lie outside the laws of nature (the description of Jesus walking on water that held him up, the changing of the water into wine). Sometimes a natural phenomenon is seen from an unusual angle by virtue of the fact that the time element is very short: the immediate calming of the storm, the instantaneous withering of the fig tree, the miracle catch of fish, as if all the fish in the sea had come together at exactly the place where the nets were cast.

God intervenes in His Omnipotent Power in all these episodes. One need not be surprised by what He is able to achieve; by human standards it is stupendous, but for Him it is not. This does not at all mean that a believer should forget science. A belief in divine miracles and in science is quite compatible: one is on a divine scale, the other on a human one.

Personally, I am very willing to believe that Jesus cured a leper, but I cannot accept the fact that a text is declared authentic and inspired by God when I read that only twenty generations existed between the first man and Abraham. Luke says this in his Gospel (3, 23-28). We shall see in a moment the reasons that show why Luke's text, like the Old Testament text on the same theme, is quite simply a product of human imagination.

The Gospels (like the Qur'an) give us the same description of Jesus's biological origins. The formation of Jesus in the maternal uterus occurred in circumstances which lay outside the laws of nature common to all human beings. The ovule produced by the mother's ovary did not need to

join with a spermatozoon, which should have come from his father, to form the embryo and hence a viable infant. The phenomenon of the birth of a normal individual without the fertilizing action of the male is called 'parthenogenesis'. In the animal kingdom, parthenogenesis can be observed under certain conditions. This is true for various insects, certain invertebrates and, very occasionally, a select breed of bird. By way of experiment, it has been possible, for example, in certain mammals (female rabbits), to obtain the beginnings of a development of the ovule into an embryo at an extremely rudimentary stage without any intervention of spermatozoon. It was not possible to go any further however and an example of complete parthenogenesis, whether experimental or natural, is unknown. Jesus is an unique case. Mary was a virgin mother. She preserved her virginity and did not have any children apart from Jesus. Jesus is a biological exception.[34]

THE GENEALOGIES OF JESUS.

The two genealogies contained in Matthew's and Luke's Gospels give rise to problems of verisimilitude, and conformity with scientific data, and hence authenticity. These problems are a source of great embarrassment to Christian commentators because the latter refuse to see in them what is very obviously the product of human imagination. The authors of the Sacerdotal text of Genesis, Sixth century B.C., had already been inspired by imagination for their genealogies of the first men. It again inspired Matthew and Luke for the data they did not take from the Old Testament.

One must straight away note that the male genealogies have absolutely no relevance to Jesus. Were one to give a genealogy to Mary's only son, who was without a biological father, it would have to be the genealogy of his mother Mary.

Here is the text of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, 1952:

The genealogy according to Matthew is at the beginning of his Gospel:

Abraham	was the father of	Isaac
Isaac	was the father of	Jacob
Jacob	was the father of	Judah and his brothers
Judah	was the father of	Perez and Zerah by Tamar
Perez	was the father of	Hezron
Hezron	was the father of	Ram
Ram	was the father of	Amminadab
Amminadab	was the father of	Nahshon
Nahshon	was the father of	Salmon
Salmon	was the father of	Boaz by Rahab

Boaz	was the father of	Obed by Ruth
Obed	was the father of	Jesse
Jesse	was the father of	David the king
David	was the father of	Solomon by the wife of
Solomon	was the father of	Uriah
Rehoboam	was the father of	Rehoboam
Abijah	was the father of	Abijah
Asa	was the father of	Asa
Jehoshaphat	was the father of	Jehoshaphat
Joram	was the father of	Joram
Uzziah	was the father of	Uzziah
Jotham	was the father of	Jotham
Ahaz	was the father of	Ahaz
Hezekiah	was the father of	Hezekiah
Manasseh	was the father of	Manasseh
Amos	was the father of	Amos
Josiah	was the father of	Josiah
		Jechoniah and his brothers

at the time of the
After the

deportation to Babylon.
deportation to Babylon:

Jechoniah	was the father of	Shealtiel
Shealtiel	was the father of	Zerubbabel
Zerubbabel	was the father of	Abiud
Abiud	was the father of	Eliakim
Eliakim	was the father of	Azor
Azor	was the father of	Zadok
Zadok	was the father of	Achim
Achim	was the father of	Eliud
Eliud	was the father of	Eleazar
Eleazar	was the father of	Matthan
Matthan	was the father of	Jacob
Jacob	was the father of	Joseph the husband of Mary
	of whom Jesus was born, who was called Christ	

"THE BOOK OF THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF DAVID, THE SON
OF ABRAHAM.

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the
deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ
fourteen generations". (Matthew, I, 1-17)

The genealogy given by Luke (3, 23-38) is different from Matthew. The text reproduced here is from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible:

"Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Ami, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God."

The genealogies appear more clearly when presented in two tables, one showing the genealogy before David and the other after him.

GENEALOGY OF JESUS, BEFORE DAVID

According to Luke	According to Marrhew
Adam .1	
Seth .2	
Enos .3	
Cainan .4	
Mahalaleel .5	
Jared .6	
Enoch .7	
Methuselah .8	
Lamech .9	
Noah .10	
Shem .11	
Arphaxad .12	
Cainan .13	
Shelah .14	
Eber .15	
Peleg .16	
Reu .17	
Serug .18	
Nahor .19	
Terah .20	
Abraham .21	
Isaac .22	
Jacob .23	
Judah .24	
Perez .25	
Hezron .26	
Arni .27	
Admin .28	
Amminadab .29	
Nahshon .30	
Sala .31	
Boaz .32	
Obed .33	
Jesse .34	
David .35	
	Matthew does not mention any name before Abraham.
	Abraham .1
	Isaac .2
	Jacob .3
	Judah .4
	Perez .5
	Hezron .6
	Ram .7
	Amminadab .8
	Nahshon .9
	Salmon .10
	Boaz .11
	Obed .12
	Jesse .13
	David .14

GENEALOGY OF JESUS, AFTER DAVID

According to Luke	According to Matthew
35 David	14 David
36 Nathan	15 Solomon
37 Mattatha	16 Rehoboam
38 Menna	17 Abijah
39 Melea	18 Am
40 Eliakim	19 Jehoshaphat
41 Jonam	20 Joram
42 Joseph	21 Uzziah
43 Judah	22 Jotham
44 Simeon	23 Ahaz
45 Levi	24 Hezekiah
46 Matthat	25 Manasseh
47 Jorim	26 Amos
48 Eliezer	27 Josiah
49 Joshua	28 Jechoniah
50 Er	
51 Elmadam	Deportation to Babylon
52 Cosam	
53 Addi	29 Shealtiel
54 Melchi	30 Zerubbabel
55 Neri	31 Abiud
56 Shealtiel	32 Eliakim
57 Zerubbabel	33 Azor
58 Rhesa	34 Zadok
59 Joanan	35 Achim
60 Joda	36 Eliud
61 Josech	37 Eleazar
62 Semein	38 Matthan
63 Mattathias	39 Jacob
64 Maath	40 Joseph
65 Naggai	41 Jesus
66 Esli	
67 Nahum	
68 Amos	
69 Mattathias	
70 Joseph	
71 Jannai	
72 Melchi	
73 Levi	
74 Matthat	
75 Heli	
76 Joseph	

77 Jesus	
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VARIATIONS IN THE MANUSCRIPTS AND IN RELATION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Apart from variations in spelling, the following must be mentioned:

a) *Matthew's Gospel*

The genealogy has disappeared from the *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis*, a very important Six century manuscript in both Greek and Latin. It has completely disappeared from the Greek text and also a large part of the Latin text. It may quite simply be that the first pages were lost.

One must note here the great liberties Matthew has taken with the Old Testament. He has pared down the genealogies for the sake of a strange numerical demonstration (which, in the end, he does not give, as we shall see).

b) *Luke's Gospel*

- 1.-Before Abraham: Luke mentions 20 names; the Old Testament only mentions 19 (see table of Adam's descendants in the Old Testament section of this work). After Arphaxad (No. 12) , Luke has added a person called Cainan (No. 13), who is not mentioned in Genesis as the son of Arphaxad.
- 2.-From Abraham to David: 14 to 16 names are found according to the manuscripts.
- 3.-From David to Jesus.

The most important variation is the *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis* which attributes to Luke a whimsical genealogy taken from Matthew and to which the scribe has added five names. Unfortunately, the genealogy of Matthew's Gospel has disappeared from this manuscript, so that comparison is no longer possible.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE TEXTS.

We are here faced with two different genealogies having one essential point in common, i.e. they both pass via Abraham and David. To make this examination easier, we shall separate the whole into three critical sections:

- From Adam to Abraham.
- From Abraham to David.
- From David to Jesus.

1. The Period from Adam to Abraham

Matthew began his genealogy with Abraham so we are not concerned with his text here. Luke alone provides information on Abraham's ancestors going back to Adam: 20 names, 19 of which are to be found in Genesis (chapters 4, 5 and 11), as has already been stated.

Is it possible to believe that only 19 or 20 generations of human beings existed before Abraham? The problem has been examined in the discussion of the Old Testament. If one looks at the table of Adam's descendants, based on Genesis and giving figures for the time element contained in the Biblical text, one can see that roughly nineteen centuries passed between man's appearance on earth and the birth of Abraham. Today it is estimated that Abraham Was alive in circa 1850 B.C. and it has been deduced from this that the information provided by the Old Testament places man's appearance on earth at roughly thirty-eight centuries B.C. Luke was obviously guided by these data for his Gospel. He expresses a blatant untruth for having copied them down and we have already seen the decisive historical arguments leading to this statement.

The idea that Old Testament data are unacceptable in the present day is duly admitted; they belong to the 'obsolete' material referred to by the Second Vatican Council. The fact, however that the Gospels take up the same scientifically incompatible data is an extremely serious observation which may be used to oppose those who defend the historical accuracy of the Gospel texts.

Commentators have quickly sensed this danger. They try to get round the difficulty by saying that it is not a complete genealogical tree, that the evangelist has missed names out. They claim that this was done quite deliberately, and that his sole "intention was to establish the broad lines or essential elements of a line of descent based on historical reality." [35] There is nothing in the texts that permits them to form this hypothesis. In the text it says quite clearly: A was the father of B, or B was the son of A. For the part preceding Abraham in particular, the evangelist draws moreover on the Old Testament where the genealogies are set out in the following form:

When X had lived n years, he became the father of Y . . . When Y had lived n years, he became the father of Z. . . .

There is therefore no break.

The part of Jesus's genealogy according to Luke, which precedes Abraham, is not acceptable in the light of modern knowledge.

2. The Period from Abraham to David.

Here the two genealogies tally (or almost), excepting one or two names: the difference may be explained by copiers' errors.

Does this mean that the evangelists are to be considered accurate?

History situates David at circa 1000 B.C. and Abraham at 1800-1860 B.C.: 14 to 16 generations for roughly eight centuries. Can one believe this? One might say that for this period the Gospel texts are at the very limit of the admissible.

3. The Post-David Period.

It is a great pity, but unfortunately the texts no longer tally at all when it comes to establishing Joseph's line from David, and figuratively speaking, Jesus's, for the Gospel.

Leaving aside the obvious falsification in the *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis* concerning Luke, let us now compare what the two most venerable manuscripts have to offer: the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus*.

In the genealogy according to Luke 42 names are placed after David (No. 35) down to Jesus (No. 77). In the genealogy according to Matthew 27 are mentioned after David (No. 14) down to Jesus (No. 41). The number of (fictitious) ancestors given to Jesus after David is therefore different in the two Gospels. The names themselves are different as well.

This is not all.

Matthew tells us that he discovered how Jesus's genealogy split up after Abraham into three groups of 14 names; first group from Abraham to David; second from David to the deportation to Babylon; third from the deportation to Jesus. His text does indeed contain 14 names in the first two groups, but in the third-from the deportation to Jesus-there are only 13 and not 14, as expected; the table shows that Shealthiel is No. 29 and Jesus No. 41. There is no variation of Matthew that gives 14 names for this group.

To enable himself to have 14 names in his second group, Matthew takes very great liberties with the Old Testament text. The names of the first six descendants of David (No. 15 to 20) tally with the data in the Old Testament, but the three descendants of Ioram (No. 20), given in Chronicles 11 of the Bible as Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, are suppressed by Matthew. Elsewhere, Jechoniah (No. 28) is for Matthew the son of Josiah, although Kings II of the Bible tells us that Eliakim comes between Josiah and Jechoniah.

It may be seen from this that Matthew has altered the genealogical lines in the Old Testament to present an artificial group of 14 names between David and the deportation to Babylon. There is also the fact that one name is missing in Matthew's third group, so that none of the present-day

Gospel texts contains the 42 names mentioned. What is surprising is not so much the existence of the omission itself (explained perhaps by a very old scribe's error that was subsequently perpetuated), but the almost total silence of commentators on this subject. How can one miss this omission? W. Trilling breaks this pious conspiracy of silence in his book *The Gospel According to Matthew* (L'Evangile selon Matthieu)[36] by devoting one line to it. It is a fact which is of considerable importance because the commentators of this Gospel, including the Ecumenical Translation and Cardinal Daniélou among others, stress the great symbolical significance of Matthew's 3 x 14. This significance was so important for the evangelist that he suppressed Biblical names without hesitation to arrive at his numerical demonstration.

To make this hold good, commentators will, no doubt, construct some reassuring statements of an apologetic nature, justifying the fact that names have been craftily suppressed and carefully avoiding the omission that undermines the whole point of what the evangelist was trying to show.

COMMENTARIES OF MODERN EXPERTS IN EXEGESIS.

In his book *The Gospels of Childhood* (1967) *Les Evangiles de l'Enfance*)[37], Cardinal Daniélou invests Matthew's 'numerical schematisation' with a symbolic value of paramount importance since it is this that establishes Jesus's ancestry, which is asserted also by Luke. For him Luke and Matthew are 'historians' who have completed their 'historical investigations', and the 'genealogy' has been 'taken down from the archives of Jesus family'. It must be added here that the archives have never been found.[38] Cardinal Daniélou condemns out of hand anyone who criticizes his point of view. "It is the Western mentality, ignorance of Judeo-Christianity and the absence of a Semitic outlook that have made so many experts in exegesis lose their way when interpreting the Gospels. They have projected their own categories onto them: (sic) Platonic, Cartesian, Hegelian and Heideggerian. It is easy to see why everything is mixed up in their minds." Plato, Descartes, Hegel and Heidegger obviously have nothing to do with the critical attitude one may have towards these whimsical genealogies.

In his search for the meaning of Matthew's 3 x 14, the author expands on strange suppositions. They are worth quoting here: "What may be meant are the common ten weeks of the Jewish Apocalypse. The first three, corresponding to the time from Adam to Abraham, would have been subtracted; seven weeks of years would then remain, the first six would correspond to the six times seven representing the three groups of fourteen and leaving the seventh, started by Christ with whom the seventh age of the world begins." Explanations like this are beyond comment!

The commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation-New Testament*-also give us numerical variations of an apologetic nature which are equally unexpected: For Matthew's 3 x 14:

a) 14 could be the numerical total of the 3 consonants in the Hebrew name David (D= 4, V= 6), hence $4+6+4= 14$.

b) $3 \times 14 = 6 \times 7$ and "Jesus came at the end of the sixth week of Holy history beginning with Abraham."

For Luke, this translation gives 77 names from Adam to Jesus, allowing the number 7 to come up again, this time by dividing 77 by 7 ($7 \times 11 = 77$). It is quite apparent that for Luke the number of variations where words are added or subtracted is such that a list of 77 names is completely artificial. It does however have the advantage of adapting itself to these numerical games.

The genealogies of Jesus as they appear in the Gospels may perhaps be the subject that has led Christian commentators to perform their most characteristic feats of dialectic acrobatics, on par indeed with Luke's and Matthew's imagination.

Contradictions and Improbabilities in the Descriptions.

Each of the four Gospels contains a large number of descriptions of events that may be unique to one single Gospel or common to several if not all of them. When they are unique to one Gospel, they sometimes raise serious problems. Thus, in the case of an event of considerable importance, it is surprising to find the event mentioned by only one evangelist; Jesus's Ascension into heaven on the day of Resurrection, for example. Elsewhere, numerous events are differently described—sometimes very differently indeed—by two or more evangelists. Christians are very often astonished at the existence of such contradictions between the Gospels—if they ever discover them. This is because they have been repeatedly told in tones of the greatest assurance that the New Testament authors were the eyewitnesses of the events they describe!

Some of these disturbing improbabilities and contradictions have been shown in previous chapters. It is however the later events of Jesus's life in particular, along with the events following the Passion, that form the subject of varying or contradictory descriptions.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PASSION

Father Roguet himself notes that Passover is placed at different times in relation to Jesus's Last Supper with His disciples in the Synoptic Gospels and John's Gospel. John places the Last Supper 'before the Passover celebrations' and the other three evangelists place it during the celebrations themselves. Obvious improbabilities emerge from this divergence: a certain episode becomes impossible because of the position of Passover in relation to it. When one knows the importance it had in the Jewish liturgy and the importance of the meal where Jesus bids farewell to his disciples, how is it possible to believe that the memory of one event in relation to the other could have faded to such an extent in the tradition recorded later by the evangelists?

On a more general level, the descriptions of the Passion differ from one evangelist to another, and more particularly between John and the first three Gospels. The Last Supper and the Passion in John's Gospel are both very long, twice as long as in Mark and Luke, and roughly one and a

half times as long as Matthew's text. John records a very long speech of Jesus to His disciples which takes up four chapters (14 to 17) of his Gospel. During this crowning speech, Jesus announces that He will leave His last instructions and gives them His last spiritual testament. There is no trace of this in the other Gospels. The same process can work the other way however; Matthew, Luke and Mark all relate Jesus's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, but John does not mention it.

JOHN'S GOSPEL DOES NOT DESCRIBE THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST.

The most important fact that strikes the reader of the Passion in John's Gospel is that he makes absolutely no reference to the institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper of Jesus with His Apostles.

There is not a single Christian who does not know the iconography of the Last Supper, where Jesus is for the last time seated among His Apostles at table. The world's greatest painters have always represented this final gathering with John sitting near Jesus, John whom we are accustomed to considering as the author of the Gospel bearing that name.

However astonishing it may appear to many, the majority of specialists do not consider John to have been the author of the fourth Gospel, nor does the latter mention the institution of the Eucharist. The consecration of the bread and wine, which become the body and blood of Jesus, is the most essential act of the Christian liturgy. The other evangelists refer to it, even if they do so in differing terms, as we have noted above. John does not say anything about it. The four evangelists' descriptions have only two single points in common: the prediction of Peter's denial and of the betrayal by one of the Apostles (Judas Iscariot is only actually named in Matthew and John). John's description is the only one which refers to Jesus washing his disciples' feet at the beginning of the meal.

How can this omission in John's Gospel be explained?

If one reasons objectively, the hypothesis that springs immediately to mind (always supposing the story as told by the other three evangelists is exact) is that a passage of John's Gospel relating the said episode was lost. This is not the conclusion arrived at by Christian commentators.

Let us now examine some of the positions they have adopted.

In his *Little Dictionary of the New Testament* (Petit Dictionnaire du Nouveau Testament) A. Tricot makes the following entry under *Last Supper* (Cène). "Last meal Jesus partook of with the Twelve Disciples during which he instituted the Eucharist. It is described in the Synoptic Gospels" (references to Matthew, Mark and Luke). ". . . and the fourth Gospel gives us further details" (references to John). In his entry on the Eucharist (Eucharistie), the same author writes the following. "The institution of the Eucharist is briefly related in the first three Gospels: it was an extremely important part of the Apostolic system of religious instruction. Saint John has added an indispensable complement to these brief descriptions in his account of Jesus's speech on the bread of life (6, 32-58)." The commentator consequently fails to mention that John does not describe Jesus's institution of the Eucharist. The author speaks of 'complementary details', but

they are not complementary to the institution of the Eucharist (he basically describes the ceremony of the washing of the Apostles' feet). The commentator speaks of the 'bread of life', but it is Jesus's reference (quite separate from the Last Supper) to God's daily gift of manna in the wilderness at the time of the Jews' exodus led by Moses. John is the only one of the evangelists who records this allusion. In the following passage of his Gospel, John does, of course, mention Jesus's reference to the Eucharist in the form of a digression on the bread, but no other evangelist speaks of this episode.

One is surprised therefore both by John's silence on what the other three evangelists relate and their silence on what, according to John, Jesus is said to have predicted.

The commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible, New Testament*, do actually acknowledge this omission in John's Gospel. This is the explanation they come up with to account for the fact that the description of the institution of the Eucharist is missing: "In general, John is not very interested in the traditions and institutions of a bygone Israel. This may have dissuaded him from showing the establishment of the Eucharist in the Passover liturgy". Are we seriously to believe that it was a lack of interest in the Jewish Passover liturgy that led John not to describe the institution of the most fundamental act. in the liturgy of the new religion?

The experts in exegesis are so embarrassed by the problem that theologians rack their brains to find prefigurations or equivalents of the Eucharist in episodes of Jesus's life recorded by John. O. Culmann for example, in his book, *The New Testament* (Le Nouveau Testament), states that "the changing of the water into wine and the feeding of the five thousand prefigure the sacrament of the Last Supper (the 'Eucharist')". It is to be remembered that the water was changed into wine because the latter had failed at a wedding in Cana. (This was Jesus's first miracle, described by John in chapter 2, 1-12. He is the only evangelist to do so). In the case of the feeding of the five thousand, this was the number of people who were fed on 5 barley loaves that were miraculously multiplied. When describing these events, John makes no special comment, and the parallel exists only in the mind of this expert in exegesis. One can no more understand the reasoning behind the parallel he draws than his view that the curing of a paralyzed man and of a man born blind 'predict the baptism' and that 'the water and blood issuing from Jesus's side after his death unite in a single fact' a reference to both baptism and the Eucharist.

Another parallel drawn by the same expert in exegesis concerning the Eucharist is quoted by Father Roguet in his book *Initiation to the Gospel* (Initiation à l'Evangile). "Some theologians, such as Oscar Culmann, see in the description of the washing of the feet before the Last Supper a symbolical equivalent to the institution of the Eucharist . . ."

It is difficult to see the cogency of all the parallels that commentators have invented to help people accept more readily the most disconcerting omission in John's Gospel.

APPEARANCES OF JESUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

A prime example of imagination at work in a description has already been given in the portrayal of the abnormal phenomena said to have accompanied Jesus's death given in Matthew's Gospel.

The events that followed the Resurrection provided material for contradictory and even absurd descriptions on the part of all the evangelists.

Father Roguet in his *Initiation to the Gospel* (Initiation à l'Évangile), page 182, provides examples of the confusion, disorder and contradiction reigning in these writings:

"The list of women who came to the tomb is not exactly the same in each of the three Synoptic Gospels. In John only one woman came: Mary Magdalene. She speaks in the plural however, as if she were accompanied: 'we do not know where they have laid him.' In Matthew the Angel predicts to the women that they will see Jesus in Galilee. A few moments later however, Jesus joins them beside the tomb. Luke probably sensed this difficulty and altered the source a little. The Angel says: 'Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee . . .' In fact, Luke only actually refers to three appearances . . ." - "John places two appearances at an interval of one week in the upper room at Jerusalem and the third beside the lake, in Galilee therefore. Matthew records only one appearance in Galilee." The commentator excludes from this examination the last section of Mark's Gospel concerning the appearances because he believes this was 'probably written by another hand'.

All these facts contradict the mention of Jesus's appearances, contained in *Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians* (15,5-7), to more than five hundred people at once, to James, to all the Apostles and, of course, to Paul himself.

After this, it is surprising therefore to find that Father Roguet stigmatizes, in the same book, the 'grandiloquent and puerile phantasms of certain Apocrypha' when talking of the Resurrection. Surely these terms are perfectly appropriate to Matthew and Paul themselves: they are indeed in complete contradiction with the other Apostles on the subject of the appearances of Jesus raised from the dead.

Apart from this, there is a contradiction between Luke's description, in the Acts of the Apostles, of Jesus's appearance to Paul and what Paul himself succinctly tells us of it. This has led Father Kannengiesser in his book, *Faith in the Resurrection, Resurrection of Faith* (Foi en la Resurrection, Resurrection de la Foi), 1974, to stress that Paul, who was 'the sole eyewitness of Christ's resurrection, whose voice comes directly to us from his writings[39], never speaks of his personal encounter with Him Who was raised from the dead-' . . . except for three extremely , 'he refrains moreover from describing discreet references . . . it.'

The contradiction between Paul, who was the sole eyewitness but is dubious, and the Gospels is quite obvious.

O. Culmann in his book, *The New Testament* (Le Nouveau Testament), notes the contradictions between Luke and Matthew. The first situates Jesus's appearances in Judea, the second in Galilee.

One should also remember the Luke-John contradiction.

John (21, 1-14) relates an episode in which Jesus raised from the dead appears to the fishermen beside the Sea of Tiberias; they subsequently catch so many fish that they are unable to bring them all in. This is nothing other than a repetition of the miracle catch of fish episode which took place at the same spot and was also described by Luke (5, 1-11), as an event of Jesus's life.

When talking of these appearances, Father Roguet assures us in his book that 'their disjointed, blurred and disordered character inspires confidence' because all these facts go to show that there was no connivance between the evangelists[40], otherwise they would definitely have coordinated their stories. This is indeed a strange line of argument. In actual fact, they could all have recorded, with complete sincerity, traditions of the communities which (unknown to them) all contained elements of fantasy. This hypothesis is unavoidable when one is faced with so many contradictions and improbabilities in the description of events.

ASCENSION OF JESUS

Contradictions are present until the very end of the descriptions because neither John nor Matthew refer to Jesus's Ascension. Mark and Luke are the only one to speak of it.

For Mark (16, 19), Jesus was 'taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God' without any precise date being given in relation to His Resurrection. It must however be noted that the final passage of Mark containing this sentence is, for Father Roguet, an 'invented' text, although for the Church it is canonic!

There remains Luke, the only evangelist to provide an undisputed text of the Ascension episode (24, 51): 'he parted from them[41] and was carried up into heaven'. The evangelist places the event at the end of the description of the Resurrection and appearance to the eleven Apostles: the details of the Gospel description imply that the Ascension took place on the day of the Resurrection. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke (whom everybody believes to be their author) describes in chapter 1, 3 Jesus's appearance to the Apostles, between the Passion and the Ascension, in the following terms:

"To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God."

The placing of the Christian festival of the Ascension at forty days after Easter, the Festival of the Resurrection, originates from this passage in the Acts of the Apostles. The date is therefore set in contradiction to Luke's Gospel: none of the other Gospel texts say anything to justify this in a different way.

The Christian who is aware of this situation is highly disconcerted by the obviousness of the contradiction. The *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible, New Testament*, acknowledges the facts but does not expand on the contradiction. It limits itself to noting the relevance the forty days may have had to Jesus's mission.

Commentators wishing to explain everything and reconcile the irreconcilable provide some strange interpretations on this subject.

The *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* edited in 1972 by the Biblical School of Jerusalem (vol. 2, page 451) contains, for example, some very strange commentaries.

The very word , Ascension' is criticized as follows: "In fact there was no ascension in the actual physical sense because God is no more 'on high' than he is 'below' " (sic). It is difficult to grasp the sense of this comment because one wonders how Luke could otherwise have expressed himself.

Elsewhere, the author of this commentary sees a 'literary artifice' in the fact that "in the Acts, the Ascension is said to have taken place forty days after the resurrection". this 'artifice' is "intended to stress the notion that the period of Jesus's appearances on earth is at an end". He adds however, in relation to the fact that in Luke's Gospel, "the event is situated during the evening of Easter Sunday, because the evangelist does not put any breaks between the various episodes recorded following the discovery of the empty tomb on the morning of the resurrection..."-" . . . surely this is also a literary artifice, intended to allow a certain lapse of time before the appearance of Jesus raised from the dead." (sic)

The feeling of embarrassment that surrounds these interpretations is even more obvious in Father Roguet's book. He discerns not one, but two Ascensions!

"Whereas from Jesus's point of view the Ascension coincides with the Resurrection, from the disciples' point of view it does not take place until Jesus ceases definitely to present Himself to them, so that the Spirit may be given to them and the period of the Church may begin."

To those readers who are not quite able to grasp the theological subtlety of his argument (which has absolutely no Scriptural basis whatsoever), the author issues the following general warning, which is a model of apologetical verbiage:

"Here, as in many similar cases, the problem only appears insuperable if one takes Biblical statements literally, and forgets their religious significance. It is not a matter of breaking down the factual reality into a symbolism which is inconsistent, but rather of looking for the theological intentions of those revealing these mysteries to us by providing us with facts we can apprehend with our senses and signs appropriate to our incarnate spirit."

JESUS'S LAST DIALOGUES. THE PARACLETE OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

John is the only evangelist to report the episode of the last dialogue with the Apostles. It takes place at the end of the Last Supper and before Jesus's arrest. It ends in a very long speech: four chapters in John's Gospel (14 to 17) are devoted to this narration which is not mentioned anywhere in the other Gospels. These chapters of John nevertheless deal with questions of prime importance and fundamental significance to the future outlook. They are set out with all the

grandeur and solemnity that characterizes the farewell scene between the Master and His disciples.

This very touching farewell scene which contains Jesus's spiritual testament, is entirely absent from Matthew, Mark and Luke. How can the absence of this description be explained? One might ask the following. did the text initially exist in the first three Gospels? Was it subsequently suppressed? Why? It must be stated immediately that no answer can be found; the mystery surrounding this huge gap in the narrations of the first three evangelists remains as obscure as ever.

The dominating feature of this narration-seen in the crowning speech-is the view of man's future that Jesus describes, His care in addressing His disciples, and through them the whole of humanity, His recommendations and commandments and His concern to specify the guide whom man must follow after His departure. The text of John's Gospel is the only one to designate him as *Parakletos* in Greek, which in English has become 'Paraclete'. The following are the essential passages:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete." (14, 15-16)

What does 'Paraclete' mean? The *present* text of John's Gospel explains its meaning as follows:

"But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (14, 26).
"he will bear witness to me" (15, 26).

"it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment . . ." (16, 7-8).

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me . . ."
(16, 13-14).

(It must be noted that the passages in John, chapters 14-17, which have not been cited here, in no way alter the general meaning of these quotations).

On a cursory reading, the text which identifies the Greek word 'Paraclete' with the Holy Spirit is unlikely to attract much attention. This is especially true when the subtitles of the text are generally used for translations and the terminology commentators employ in works for mass publication direct the reader towards the meaning in these passages that an exemplary orthodoxy would like them to have. Should one have the slightest difficulty in comprehension, there are many explanations available, such as those given by A. Tricot in his *Little Dictionary of the New Testament* (Petit Dictionnaire du Nouveau Testament) to enlighten one on this subject. In his entry on the Paraclete this commentator writes the following:

"This name or title translated from the Greek is only used in the New Testament by John: he uses it four times in his account of Jesus's speech after the Last Supper[42] (14, 16 and 26; 15, 26; 16, 7) and once in his First Letter (2, 1). In John's Gospel the word is applied to the Holy Spirit; in the Letter it refers to Christ. 'Paraclete' was a term in current usage among the Hellenist Jews, First century A.D., meaning 'intercessor', 'defender' (. . .) Jesus predicts that the Spirit will be sent by the Father and Son. Its mission will be to take the place of the Son in the role he played during his mortal life as a helper for the benefit of his disciples. The Spirit will intervene and act as a substitute for Christ, adopting the role of Paraclete or omnipotent intercessor."

This commentary therefore makes the Holy Spirit into the ultimate guide of man after Jesus's departure. How does it square with John's text?

It is a necessary question because *a priori* it seems strange to ascribe the last paragraph quoted above to the Holy Spirit: "for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." It seems inconceivable that one could ascribe to the Holy Spirit the ability to speak and declare whatever he hears . . . Logic demands that this question be raised, but to my knowledge, it is not usually the subject of commentaries.

To gain an exact idea of the problem, one has to go back to the basic Greek text. This is especially important because John is universally recognized to have written in Greek instead of another language. The Greek text consulted was the *Novum Testamentum Graece*[43].

Any serious textual criticism begins with a search for variations. Here it would seem that in all the known manuscripts of John's Gospel, the only variation likely to change the meaning of the sentence is in passage 14, 26 of the famous Palimpsest version written in Syriac[44]. Here it is not the Holy Spirit that is mentioned, but quite simply the Spirit. Did the scribe merely miss out a word or, knowing full well that the text he was to copy claimed to make the Holy Spirit hear and speak, did he perhaps lack the audacity to write something that seemed absurd to him? Apart from this observation there is little need to labour the other variations, they are grammatical and do not change the general meaning. The important thing is that what has been demonstrated here with regard to the exact meaning of the verbs 'to hear' and 'to speak' should apply to all the other manuscripts of John's Gospel, as is indeed the case.

The verb 'to hear', in the translation is the Greek verb '*akouô*' meaning to perceive sounds. It has, for example, given us the word 'acoustics', the science of sounds.

The verb 'to speak' in the translation is the Greek verb '*laleô*' which has the general meaning of 'to emit sounds' and the specific meaning of 'to speak'. This verb occurs very frequently in the Greek text of the Gospels. It designates a solemn declaration made by Jesus during His preachings. It therefore becomes clear that the communication to man which He here proclaims does not in any way consist of a statement inspired by the agency of the Holy Spirit. It has a very obvious material character moreover, which comes from the idea of the emission of sounds conveyed by the Greek word that defines it.

The two Greek verbs '*akouô*' and '*laleô*' therefore define concrete actions which can only be applied to a being with hearing and speech organs. It is consequently impossible to apply them to the Holy Spirit.

For this reason, the text of this passage from John's Gospel, as handed down to us in Greek manuscripts, is quite incomprehensible if one takes it as a whole, including the words 'Holy Spirit' in passage 14, 26. "But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name" etc. It is the only passage in John's Gospel that identifies the Paraclete with the Holy Spirit.

If the words 'Holy Spirit' (*to pneuma to agion*) are omitted from the passage, the complete text of John then conveys a meaning which is perfectly clear. It is confirmed moreover, by another text by the same evangelist, the First Letter, where John uses the same word 'Paraclete' simply to mean Jesus, the intercessor at God's side[45]. According to John, when Jesus says (14, 16): "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete", what He is saying is that 'another' intercessor will be sent to man, as He Himself was at God's side on man's behalf during His earthly life.

According to the rules of logic therefore, one is brought to see in John's Paraclete a human being like Jesus, possessing the faculties of hearing and speech formally implied in John's Greek text. Jesus therefore predicts that God will later send a human being to Earth to take up the role defined by John, i.e. to be a prophet who hears God's word and repeats his message to man. This is the logical interpretation of John's texts arrived at if one attributes to the words their proper meaning.

The presence of the term 'Holy Spirit' in today's text could easily have come from a later addition made quite deliberately. It may have been intended to change the original meaning which predicted the advent of a prophet subsequent to Jesus and was therefore in contradiction with the teachings of the Christian churches at the time of their formation; these teachings maintained that Jesus was the last of the prophets.

Conclusions

The facts recorded here and the commentaries quoted from several extremely eminent Christian experts in exegesis have refuted affirmations of orthodoxy supported by the line adopted by the last Council on the absolute historical authenticity of the Gospels. These are said to have faithfully transmitted what Jesus actually did and taught.

Several different kinds of argument have been given.

Firstly, quotations from the Gospels themselves show flat contradictions. It is impossible to believe two facts that contradict each other. Neither can one accept certain improbabilities and

affirmations that go against the cast-iron data provided by modern knowledge. In this respect, the two genealogies of Jesus given in the Gospels and the untruths implied in them are quite conclusive.

These contradictions, improbabilities and incompatibilities pass unnoticed by many Christians. They are astonished when they discover them because they have been influenced by their reading of commentaries that provide subtle explanations calculated to reassure them and orchestrated by an apologetic lyricism. Some very typical examples have been given of the skill employed by certain experts in exegesis in camouflaging what they modestly call 'difficulties'. There are very few passages indeed in the Gospels that have been acknowledged as inauthentic although the Church declares them canonic.

According to Father Kannengiesser, works of modern textual criticism have revealed data which constitute a 'revolution in methods of Biblical exegesis' so that the facts relating to Jesus recorded in the Gospels are no longer 'to be taken literally', they are 'writings suited to an occasion' or 'combat writings'. Modern knowledge has brought to light the history of Judeo-Christianity and the rivalry between communities which accounts for the existence of facts that today's readers find disconcerting. The concept of eyewitness evangelists is no longer defensible, although numerous Christians still retain it today. The work done at the Biblical School of Jerusalem (Fathers Benoit and Boismard) shows very clearly that the Gospels were written, revised and corrected several times. They also warn the reader that he is "obliged in more than one case to give up the notion of hearing Jesus's voice directly".

The historical nature of the Gospels is beyond question. Through descriptions referring to Jesus however, these documents provide us above all with information about the character of their authors, the spokesmen for the tradition of the early Christian communities to which they belonged, and in particular about the struggle between the Judeo-Christians and Paul: Cardinal Daniélou's work is authoritative on these points.

Why be surprised by the fact that some evangelists distort certain events in Jesus's life with the object of defending a personal point of view? Why be surprised by the omission of certain events? Why be surprised by the fictitious nature of other events described?

This leads us to compare the Gospels with the narrative poems found in Medieval literature. A vivid comparison could be made with the *Song of Roland* (Chanson de Roland), the most well-known of all poems of this kind, which relates a real event in a fictitious light. It will be remembered that it describes an actual episode: Roland was leading Charlemagne's rear-guard when it was ambushed on the pass at Roncevaux. The episode which was of minor importance, is said to have taken place on the 15th August, 778 according to historical records (Eginhard). It was raised to the stature of a great feat of arms, a battle in a war of religion. It is a whimsical description, but the imaginary element does not obliterate one of the real battles that Charlemagne had to fight in order to protect his frontiers against the attempts made by neighbouring peoples to penetrate his borders. That is the element of truth and the epic style of narrative does not remove it.

The same holds true for the Gospels: Matthew's phantasms, the fiat contradictions between Gospels, the improbabilities, the incompatibilities with modern scientific data, the successive distortions of the text-all these things add up to the fact that the Gospels contain chapters and passages that are the sole product of the human imagination. These flaws do not however cast doubt on the existence of Jesus's mission: the doubt is solely confined to the course it took.

The Qur'an and Modern Science

Introduction

The relationship between the Qur'an and science is *a priori* a surprise, especially when it turns out to be one of harmony and not of discord. A confrontation between a religious book and the secular ideas proclaimed by science is perhaps, in the eyes of many people today, something of a paradox. The majority of today's scientists, with a small number of exceptions of course, are indeed bound up in materialist theories, and have only indifference or contempt for religious questions which they often consider to be founded on legend. In the West moreover, when science and religion are discussed, people are quite willing to mention Judaism and Christianity among the religions referred to, but they hardly ever think of Islam. So many false judgements based on inaccurate ideas have indeed been made about it, that today it is very difficult to form an exact notion of the reality of Islam.

As a prelude to any confrontation between the Islamic Revelation and science, it would seem essential that an outline be given of a religion that is so little known in the West.

The totally erroneous statements made about Islam in the West are sometimes the result of ignorance, and sometimes of systematic denigration. The most serious of all the untruths told about it are however those dealing with facts; for while mistaken opinions are excusable, the presentation of facts running contrary to the reality is not. It is disturbing to read blatant untruths in eminently respectable works written by authors who *a priori* are highly qualified. The following is an example taken from the *Universalis Encyclopedia* (Encyclopedia Universalis) vol. 6. Under the heading Gospels (Evangiles) the author alludes to the differences between the latter and the Qur'an: "The evangelists (. . .) do not (. . .), as in the Qur'an, claim to transmit an autobiography that God miraculously dictated to the Prophet . . .". In fact, the Qur'an has nothing to do with an autobiography: it is a preaching; a consultation of even the worst translation would have made that clear to the author. The statement we have quoted is as far from reality as if one were to define a Gospel as an account of an evangelist's life. The person responsible for this untruth about the Qur'an is a professor at the Jesuit Faculty of Theology, Lyon ! The fact that people utter such untruths helps to give a false impression of the Qur'an and Islam.

There is hope today however because religions are no longer as inward-looking as they were and many of them are seeking for mutual understanding. One must indeed be impressed by a

knowledge of the fact that an attempt is being made on the highest level of the hierarchy by Roman Catholics to establish contact with Muslims; they are trying to fight incomprehension and are doing their utmost to change the inaccurate views on Islam that are so widely held.

In the Introduction to this work, I mentioned the great change that has taken place in the last few years and I quoted a document produced by the Office for Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican under the title *Orientations for a Dialogue between Christians and Muslims* (Orientations pour un dialogue entre chrétiens et musulmans). It is a very important document in that it shows the new position adopted towards Islam. As we read in the third edition of this study (1970), this new position calls for 'a revision of our attitude towards it and a critical examination of our prejudices' . . . 'We should first set about progressively changing the way our Christian brothers see it. This is the most important of all.' . . . We must clear away the 'out-dated image inherited from the past, or distorted by prejudice and slander' . . . , and 'recognize the past injustice towards the Muslims for which the West, with its Christian education, is to blame.'[46] The Vatican document is nearly 150 pages long. It therefore expands on the refutation of classic views held by Christians on Islam and sets out the reality.

Under the title *Emancipating ourselves from our worst prejudices* (Nous libérer de nos préjugés les plus notables) the authors address the following suggestions to Christians: "Here also, we must surrender to a deep purification of our attitude. In particular, what is meant by this are certain 'set judgements' that are all too often and too lightly made about Islam. It is essential not to cultivate in the secret of our hearts views such as these, too easily or arbitrarily arrived at, and which the sincere Muslim finds confusing."

One extremely important view of this kind is the attitude which leads people to repeatedly use the term 'Allah' to mean the God of the Muslims, as if the Muslims believed in a God who was different from the God of the Christians. *Al lāh* means 'the Divinity' in Arabic: it is a single God, implying that a correct transcription can only render the exact meaning of the word with the help of the expression 'God'. For the Muslim, *al lāh* is none other than the God of Moses and Jesus.

The document produced by the Office for Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican stresses this fundamental point in the following terms:

"It would seem pointless to maintain that Allāh is not really God, as do certain people in the West! The conciliar documents have put the above assertion in its proper place. There is no better way of illustrating Islamic faith in God than by quoting the following extracts from *Lumen Gentium*[47]. 'The Muslims profess the faith of Abraham and worship with us the sole merciful God, who is the future judge of men on the Day of Reckoning . . .'"

One can therefore understand the Muslims' protest at the all too frequent custom in European languages of saying '*Allāh*' instead of 'God' . . . Cultivated Muslims have praised D. Masson's French translation of the Qur'an for having 'at last' written 'Dieu'[48] instead of 'Allah'.

The Vatican document points out the following: "Allāh is the only word that Arabic-speaking Christians have for God." Muslims and Christians worship a single God.

The Vatican document then undertakes a critical examination of the other false judgements made on Islam.

'Islamic fatalism' is a widely-spread prejudice; the document examines this and quoting the Qur'an for support, it puts in opposition to this the notion of the responsibility man has, who is to be judged by his actions. It shows that the concept of an Islamic legalism is false; on the contrary, it opposes the sincerity of faith to this by quoting two phrases in the Qur'an that are highly misunderstood in the West:

"There is no compulsion in religion" (sura 2, verse 256)

"(God) has not laid upon you in religion any hardship" (sura 22, verse 78)

The document opposes the widely-spread notion of 'Islam, religion of fear' to 'Islam, religion of love'-love of one's neighbor based on faith in God. It refutes the falsely spread notion that Muslim morality hardly exists and the other notion, shared by so many Jews and Christians, of Islamic fanaticism. It makes the following comment on this: "In fact, Islam was hardly any more fanatical during its history than the sacred bastions of Christianity whenever the Christian faith took on, as it were, a political value." At this point, the authors quote expressions from the Qur'an that show how, in the West, the expression 'Holy War'[49] has been mis-translated; "in Arabic it is *Al jihâd fî sabîl Allâh*, the effort on God's road", "the effort to spread Islam and defend it against its aggressors." The Vatican document continues as follows: "The *jihâd* is not at all the Biblical kherem; it does not lead to extermination, but to the spreading of God's and man's rights to new lands."-"The past violence of the *jihâd* generally followed the rules of war; at the time of the Crusades moreover, it was not always the Muslims that perpetrated the worst slaughters."

Finally, the document deals with the prejudice according to which "Islam is a hide-bound religion which keeps its followers in a kind of superannuated Middle Ages, making them unfit to adapt to the technical conquests of the modern age." It compares analogous situations observed in Christian countries and states the following: "we find, (. ..) in the traditional expansion of Muslim thought, a principle of possible evolution in civilian society ."

I am certain that this defense of Islam by the Vatican will surprise many believers today, be they Muslims, Jews or Christians. It is a demonstration of sincerity and open-mindedness that is singularly in contrast with the attitudes inherited from the past. The number of people in the West who are aware of the new attitudes adopted by the highest authorities in the Catholic Church is however very small.

Once one is aware of this fact, it comes as less of a surprise to learn of the actions that sealed this reconciliation: firstly, there was the official visit made by the President of the Office for Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia; then the official reception given by Pope Paul VI to the Grand Ulema of Saudi Arabia in the course of 1974. Henceforth, one understands more clearly the spiritual significance of the fact that His Grace Bishop Elchinger received the Grand Ulema at his cathedral in Strasbourg and invited them during their visit to pray in the choir. This they did before the altar, turned towards Makka.

Thus the representatives of the Muslim and Christian worlds at their highest level, who share a faith in the same God and a mutual respect for their differences of opinion, have agreed to open a dialogue. This being so, it is surely quite natural for other aspects of each respective Revelation to be confronted. The subject of this confrontation is the examination of the Scriptures in the light of scientific data and knowledge concerning the authenticity of the texts. This examination is to be undertaken for the Qur'an as it was for the Judeo-Christian Revelation.

The relationship between religions and science has not always been the same in any one place or time. It is a fact that there is no writing belonging to a monotheistic religion that condemns science. In practice however, it must be admitted that scientists have had great difficulties with the religious authorities of certain creeds. For many centuries, in the Christian world, scientific development was opposed by the authorities in question, on their own initiative and without reference to the authentic Scriptures. We already know the measures taken against those who sought to enlarge science, measures which often made scientists go into exile to avoid being burnt at the stake, unless they recanted, changed their attitude and begged for pardon. The case of Galileo is always cited in this context: he was tried for having accepted the discoveries made by Copernicus on the rotation of the Earth. Galileo was condemned as the result of a mistaken interpretation of the Bible, since not a single Scripture could reasonably be brought against him.

In the case of Islam, the attitude towards science was, generally speaking, quite different. Nothing could be clearer than the famous Hadith of the Prophet: "Seek for science, even in China", or the other hadith which says that the search for knowledge is a strict duty for every Muslim man and woman. As we shall see further on in this section, another crucial fact is that the Qur'an, while inviting us to cultivate science, itself contains many observations on natural phenomena and includes explanatory details which are seen to be in total agreement with modern scientific data. There is no equal to this in the Judeo-Christian Revelation.

It would nevertheless be wrong to imagine that, in the history of Islam, certain believers had never harboured a different attitude towards science. It is a fact that, at certain periods, the obligation to educate oneself and others was rather neglected. It is equally true that in the Muslim world, as elsewhere, an attempt was sometimes made to stop scientific development. All the same it will be remembered that at the height of Islam, between the Eighth and Twelfth centuries A.D., i.e. at a time when restrictions on scientific development were in force in the Christian world, a very large number of studies and discoveries were being made at Islamic universities. It was there that the remarkable cultural resources of the time were to be found. The Calif's library at Cordoba contained 400,000 volumes. Averroës was teaching there, and Greek, Indian and Persian sciences were taught. This is why scholars from all over Europe went to study at Cordoba, just as today people go to the United States to perfect their studies. A very great number of ancient manuscripts have come down to us thanks to cultivated Arabs who acted as the vehicle for the culture of conquered countries. We are also greatly indebted to Arabic culture for mathematics (algebra was an Arabic invention), astronomy, physics (optics), geology, botany, medicine (Avicenna) etc. For the very first time, science took on an international character in the Islamic universities of the Middle Ages. At this time, men were more steeped in the religious spirit than they are today. but in the Islamic world, this did not prevent them from being both believers and scientists. Science was the twin of religion and it should never have ceased to be so.

The Medieval period was, for the Christian world, a time of stagnation and absolute conformity. It must be stressed that scientific research was not slowed down by the Judeo-Christian Revelation itself, but rather by those people who claimed to be its servants. Following the Renaissance, the scientists' natural reaction was to take vengeance on their former enemies; this vengeance still continues today, to such an extent indeed that in the West, anyone who talks of God in scientific circles really does stand out. This attitude affects the thinking of all young people who receive a university education, Muslims included.

Their thinking could hardly be different from what it is considering the extreme positions adopted by the most eminent scientists. A Nobel prize winner for Medicine has tried in the last few years to persuade people, in a book intended for mass publication, that living matter was able to create itself by chance from several basic components. Starting, he says, with this primitive living matter, and under the influence of various external circumstances, organized living beings were formed, resulting in the formidable complex being that constitutes man.

Surely these marvels of contemporary scientific knowledge in the field of life should lead a thinking person to the opposite conclusion. The organization presiding over the birth and maintenance of life surely appears more and more complicated as one studies it; the more details one knows, the more admiration it commands. A knowledge of this organization must surely lead one to consider as less and less probable the part chance has to play in the phenomenon of life. The further one advances along the road to knowledge, especially of the infinitely small, the more eloquent are the arguments in favor of the existence of a Creator. Instead of being filled with humility in the face of such facts, man is filled with arrogance. He sneers at any idea of God, in the same way he runs down anything that detracts from his pleasure and enjoyment. This is the image of the materialist society that is flourishing at present in the West.

What spiritual forces can be used to oppose this pollution of thought practised by many contemporary scientists?

Judaism and Christianity make no secret of their inability to cope with the tide of materialism and invasion of the West by atheism. Both of them are completely taken off guard, and from one decade to the next one can surely see how seriously diminished their resistance is to this tide that threatens to sweep everything away. The materialist atheist sees in classic Christianity nothing more than a system constructed by men over the last two thousand years designed to ensure the authority of a minority over their fellow men. He is unable to find in Judeo-Christian writings any language that is even vaguely similar to his own; they contain so many improbabilities, contradictions and incompatibilities with modern scientific data, that he refuses to take texts into consideration that the vast majority of theologians would like to see accepted as an inseparable whole.

When one mentions Islam to the materialist atheist, he smiles with a complacency that is only equal to his ignorance of the subject. In common with the majority of western intellectuals, of whatever religious persuasion, he has an impressive collection of false notions about Islam.

One must, on this point, allow him one or two excuses: Firstly, apart from the newly-adopted attitudes prevailing among the highest Catholic authorities, Islam has always been subject in the

West to a so-called 'secular slander'. Anyone in the West who has acquired a deep knowledge of Islam knows just to what extent its history, dogma, and aims have been distorted. One must also take into account the fact that documents published in European languages on this subject (leaving aside highly specialized studies) do not make the work of a person willing to learn any easier.

A knowledge of the Islamic Revelation is indeed fundamental from this point of view. Unfortunately, passages from the Qur'an, especially those relating to scientific data, are badly translated and interpreted, so that a scientist has every right to make criticisms-with apparent justification-that the Book does not actually deserve at all. This detail is worth noting henceforth: inaccuracies in translation or erroneous commentaries (the one is often associated with the other), which would not have surprised anybody one or two centuries ago, offend today's scientists. When faced with a badly translated phrase containing a scientifically unacceptable statement, the scientist is prevented from taking the phrase into serious consideration. In the chapter on human reproduction, a very typical example will be given of this kind of error.

Why do such errors in translation exist? They may be explained by the fact that modern translators often take up, rather uncritically, the interpretations given by older commentators. In their day, the latter had an excuse for having given an inappropriate definition to an Arabic word containing several possible meanings; they could not possibly have understood the real sense of the word or phrase which has only become clear in the present day thanks to scientific knowledge. In other words, the problem is raised of the necessary revision of translations and commentaries. It was not possible to do this at a certain period in the past, but nowadays we have knowledge that enables us to render their true sense. These problems of translation are not present for the texts of the Judeo-Christian Revelation. the case described here is absolutely unique to the Qur'an.

These scientific considerations, which are very specific to the Qur'an, greatly surprised me at first. Up until then, I had not thought it possible for one to find so many statements in a text compiled more than thirteen centuries ago referring to extremely diverse subjects and all of them totally in keeping with modern scientific knowledge. In the beginning, I had no faith whatsoever in Islam. I began this examination of the texts with a completely open mind and a total objectivity. If there was any influence acting upon me, it was gained from what I had been taught in my youth; people did not speak of Muslims, but of 'Muhammadans', to make it quite clear that what was meant was a religion founded by a man and which could not therefore have any kind of value in terms of God. Like many in the West, I could have retained the same false notions about Islam; they are so widely-spread today, that I am indeed surprised when I come across anyone, other than a specialist, who can talk in an enlightened manner on this subject. I therefore admit that before I was given a view of Islam different from the one received in the West, I was myself extremely ignorant.

I owe the fact that I was able to realize the false nature of the judgements generally made in the West about Islam to exceptional circumstances. It was in Saudi Arabia itself that an inkling was given to me of the extent to which opinions held in the West on this subject are liable to error.

The debt of gratitude I owe to the late King Faisal, whose memory I salute with deepest respect, is indeed very great: the fact that I was given the signal honour of hearing him speak on Islam and was able to raise with him certain problems concerning the interpretation of the Qur'an in relation to modern science is a very cherished memory. It was an extremely great privilege for me to have gathered so much precious information from him personally and those around him.

Since I had now seen the wide gap separating the reality of Islam from the image we have of it in the West, I experienced a great need to learn Arabic (which I did not speak) to be sufficiently well-equipped to progress in the study of such a misunderstood religion. My first goal was to read the Qur'an and to make a sentence-by-sentence analysis of it with the help of various commentaries essential to a critical study. My approach was to pay special attention to the description of numerous natural phenomena given in the Qur'an; the highly accurate nature of certain details referring to them in the Book, which was only apparent in the original, struck me by the fact that they were in keeping with present-day ideas, although a man living at the time of Muhammad could not have suspected this at all. I subsequently read several works written by Muslim authors on the scientific aspects- of the Qur'anic text: they were extremely helpful in my appreciation of it, but I have not so far discovered a general study of this subject made in the West.

What initially strikes the reader confronted for the first time with a text of this kind is the sheer abundance of subjects discussed: the Creation, astronomy, the explanation of certain matters concerning the earth, and the animal and vegetable kingdoms, human reproduction. Whereas monumental errors are to be found in the Bible, I could not find a single error in the Qur'an. I had to stop and ask myself: if a man was the author of the Qur'an, how could he have written facts in the Seventh century A.D. that today are shown to be in keeping with modern scientific knowledge? There was absolutely no doubt about it: the text of the Qur'an we have today is most definitely a text of the period, if I may be allowed to put it in these terms (in the next chapter of the present section of the book I shall be dealing with this problem). What human explanation can there be for this observation? In my opinion there is no explanation; there is no special reason why an inhabitant of the Arabian Peninsula should, at a time when King Dagobert was reigning in France (629-639 A.D.), have had scientific knowledge on certain subjects that was ten centuries ahead of our own.

It is an established fact that at the time of the Qur'anic Revelation, i.e. within a period of roughly twenty years straddling Hegira (622 A.D.), scientific knowledge had not progressed for centuries and the period of activity in Islamic civilization, with its accompanying scientific upsurge, came *after* the close of the Qur'anic Revelation. Only ignorance of such religious and secular data can lead to the following bizarre suggestion I have heard several times: if surprising statements of a scientific nature exist in the Qur'an, they may be accounted for by the fact that Arab scientists were so far ahead of their time and Muhammad was influenced by their work. Anyone who knows anything about Islamic history is aware that the period of the Middle Ages which saw the cultural and scientific upsurge in the Arab world came after Muhammad, and would not therefore indulge in such whims. Suggestions of this kind are particularly off the mark because the majority of scientific facts which are either suggested or very clearly recorded in the Qur'an have only been confirmed in modern times.

It is easy to see therefore how for centuries commentators on the Qur'an (including those writing at the height of Islamic culture) have inevitably made errors of interpretation in the case of certain verses whose exact meaning could not possibly have been grasped. It was not until much later, at a period not far from our own, that it was possible to translate and interpret them correctly. This implies that a thorough linguistic knowledge is not in itself sufficient to understand these verses from the Qur'an. What is needed along with this is a highly diversified knowledge of science. A study such as the present one embraces many disciplines and is in that sense encyclopedic. As the questions raised are discussed, the variety of scientific knowledge essential to the understanding of certain verses of the Qur'an will become clear.

The Qur'an does not aim at explaining certain laws governing the Universe, however; it has an absolutely basic religious objective. The descriptions of Divine Omnipotence are what principally incite man to reflect on the works of Creation. They are accompanied by references to facts accessible to human observation or to laws defined by God who presides over the organization of the universe both in the sciences of nature and as regards man. One part of these assertions is easily understood, but the meaning of the other can only be grasped if one has the essential scientific knowledge it requires. This means that in former times, man could only distinguish an apparent meaning which led him to draw the wrong conclusions on account of the inadequacy of his knowledge at the time in question.

It is possible that the choice of verses from the Qur'an which are to be studied for their scientific content may perhaps seem too small for certain Muslim writers who have already drawn attention to them before I have. In general, I believe I have retained a slightly smaller number of verses than they have. On the other hand, I have singled out several verses which until now have not, in my opinion, been granted the importance they deserve from a scientific point of view. Wherever I may have mistakenly failed to take verses into consideration for this study that were selected by these writers, I hope that they will not hold it against me. I have also found, on occasion, that certain books contain scientific interpretations which do not appear to me to be correct; it is with an open mind and a clear conscience that I have provided personal interpretations of such verses.

By the same token, I have tried to find references in the Qur'an to phenomena accessible to human comprehension but which have not been confirmed by modern science. In this context, I think I may have found references in the Qur'an to the presence of planets in the Universe that are similar to the Earth. It must be added that many scientists think this is a perfectly feasible fact, although modern data cannot provide any hint of certainty. I thought I owed it to myself to mention this, whilst retaining all the attendant reservations that might be applied.

Had this study been made thirty years ago, it would have been necessary to add another fact predicted by the Qur'an to what would have been cited concerning astronomy, this fact is the conquest of space. At that time, subsequent to the first trials of ballistic missiles, people imagined a day when man would perhaps have the material possibility of leaving his earthly habitat and exploring space. It was then known that a verse existed in the Qur'an predicting how one day man would make this conquest. This statement has now been verified.

The present confrontation between Holy Scripture and science brings ideas into play, both for the Bible and the Qur'an, which concern scientific truth. For this confrontation to be valid, the scientific arguments to be relied upon must be quite soundly established and must leave no room for doubt. Those who balk at the idea of accepting the intervention of science in an appreciation of the Scriptures deny that it is possible for science to constitute a valid term of comparison (whether it be the Bible, which does not escape the comparison unscathed-and we have seen why-or the Qur'an, which has nothing to fear from science). Science, they say, is changing with the times and a fact accepted today may be rejected later.

This last comment calls for the following observation: a distinction must be drawn between scientific theory and duly controlled observed fact. Theory is intended to explain a phenomenon or a series of phenomena not readily understandable. In many instances theory changes: it is liable to be modified or replaced by another theory when scientific progress makes it easier to analyse facts and envisage a more viable explanation. On the other hand, an observed fact checked by experimentation is not liable to modification: it becomes easier to define its characteristics, but it remains the same. It has been established that the Earth revolves around the Sun and the Moon around the Earth, and this fact will not be subject to revision; all that may be done in the future is to define the orbits more clearly.

A regard for the changing nature of theory is, for example, what made me reject a verse from the Qur'an thought by a Muslim physicist to predict the concept of anti-matter, a theory which is at present the subject of much debate. One can, on the other hand, quite legitimately devote great attention to a verse from the Qur'an describing the aquatic origins of life, a phenomenon we shall never be able to verify, but which has many arguments that speak in its favour. As for observed facts such as the evolution of the human embryo, it is quite possible to confront different stages described in the Qur'an with the data of modern embryology and find complete concordance between modern science and the verses of the Qur'an referring to this subject.

This confrontation between the Qur'an and science has been completed by two other comparisons: one is the confrontation of modern knowledge with Biblical data on the same subjects; and the other is the comparison from the same scientific point of view between the data in the Qur'an, the Book of Revelation transmitted by God to the Prophet, and the data in the Hadiths, books narrating the deeds and sayings of Muhammad that lie outside the written Revelation.

At the end of this, the third section of the present work, the detailed results of the comparison between the Biblical and Qur'anic description of a single event are given, along with an account of how the passage fared when subjected to the scientific criticism of each description. An examination has, for example, been made in the case of the Creation and of the Flood. In each instance, the incompatibilities with science in the Biblical description have been made clear. Also to be seen is the complete agreement between science and the descriptions in the Qur'an referring to them. We shall note precisely those differences that make one description scientifically acceptable in the present day and the other unacceptable.

This observation is of prime importance, since in the West, Jews, Christians and Atheists are unanimous in stating (without a scrap of evidence however) that Muhammad wrote the Qur'an or

had it written as an imitation of the Bible. It is claimed that stories of religious history in the Qur'an resume Biblical stories. This attitude is as thoughtless as saying that Jesus Himself duped His contemporaries by drawing inspiration from the Old Testament during His preachings: the whole of Matthew's Gospel is based on this continuation of the Old Testament, as we have indeed seen already. What expert in exegesis would dream of depriving Jesus of his status as God's envoy for this reason? This is nevertheless the way that Muhammad is judged more often than not in the West: "all he did Was to copy the Bible". It is a summary judgement that does not take account of the fact that the Qur'an and the Bible provide different versions of a single event. People prefer not to talk about the difference in the descriptions. They are pronounced to be the same and thus scientific knowledge need not be brought in. We shall enlarge on these problems when dealing with the description of the Creation and the Flood.

The collection of hadiths are to Muhammad what the Gospels are to Jesus: descriptions of the actions and sayings of the Prophet. Their authors were not eyewitnesses.. (This applies at least to the compilers of the collections of hadiths which are said to be the most authentic and were collected much later than the time when Muhammad was alive). They do not in any way constitute books containing the written Revelation. They are not the word of God, but the sayings of the Prophet. In these books, which are very widely read, statements are to be found containing errors from a scientific point of view, especially medical remedies. We naturally discount anything relating to problems of a religious kind, since they are not discussed here in the context of the hadiths. Many hadiths are of doubtful authenticity. they are discussed by Muslim scientists themselves. When the scientific nature of one of the hadiths is touched upon in the present work, it is essentially to put into relief all that distinguishes them from the Qur'an itself when seen from this point of view, since the latter does not contain a single scientific statement that is unacceptable. The difference, as we shall see, is quite startling.

The above observation makes the hypothesis advanced by those who see Muhammad as the author of the Qur'an quite untenable. How could a man, from being illiterate, become the most important author, in terms of literary merit, in the whole of Arabic literature? How could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human being could possibly have developed at the time, and all this without once making the slightest error in his pronouncements on the subject?

The ideas in this study are developed from a purely scientific point of view. They lead to the conclusion that it is inconceivable for a human being living in the Seventh century A.D. to have made statements in the Qur'an on a great variety of subjects that do not belong to his period and for them to be in keeping with what was to be known only centuries later. For me, there can be no human explanation to the Qur'an.

Authenticity of the Qur'an. How It Came To Be Written.

Thanks to its undisputed authenticity, the text of the Qur'an holds a unique place among the books of Revelation, shared neither by the Old nor the New Testament. In the first two sections of this work, a review was made of the alterations undergone by the Old Testament and the Gospels before they were handed down to us in the form we know today. The same is not true for the Qur'an for the simple reason that it was written down at the time of the Prophet; we shall see how it came to be written, i.e. the process involved.

In this context, the differences separating the Qur'an from the Bible are in no way due to questions essentially concerned with date. Such questions are constantly put forward by certain people without regard to the circumstances prevailing at the time when the Judeo-Christian and the Qur'anic Revelations were written; they have an equal disregard for the circumstances surrounding the transmission of the Qur'an to the Prophet. It is suggested that a Seventh century text had more likelihood of coming down to us unaltered than other texts that are as many as fifteen centuries older. This comment, although correct, does not constitute a sufficient reason ; it is made more to excuse the alterations made in the Judeo-Christian texts in the course of centuries than to underline the notion that the text of the Qur'an, which was more recent, had less to fear from being modified by man.

In the case of the Old Testament, the sheer number of authors who tell the same story, plus all the revisions carried out on the text of certain books from the pre-Christian era, constitute as many reasons for inaccuracy and contradiction. As for the Gospels, nobody can claim that they invariably contain faithful accounts of Jesus's words or a description of his actions strictly in keeping with reality. We have seen how successive versions of the texts showed a lack of definite authenticity and moreover that their authors were not eyewitnesses.

Also to be underlined is the distinction to be made between the Qur'an, a book of written Revelation, and the hadiths, collections of statements concerning the actions and sayings of Muhammad. Some of the Prophet's companions started to write them down from the moment of his death. As an element of human error could have slipped in, the collection had to be resumed later and subjected to rigorous criticism so that the greatest credit is in practise given to documents that came along after Muhammad. Their authenticity varies, like that of the Gospels. Not a single Gospel was written down at the time of Jesus (they were all written long after his earthly mission had come to an end), and not a single collection of hadiths was compiled during the time of the Prophet.

The situation is very different for the Qur'an. As the Revelation progressed, the Prophet and the believers following him recited the text by heart and it was also written down by the scribes in his following. It therefore starts off with two elements of authenticity that the Gospels do not possess. This continued up to the Prophet's death. At a time when not everybody could write, but everyone was able to recite, recitation afforded a considerable advantage because of the double-checking possible when the definitive text was compiled.

The Qur'anic Revelation was made by Archangel Gabriel to Muhammad. It took place over a period of more than twenty years of the Prophet's life, beginning with the first verses of Sura 96, then resuming after a three-year break for a long period of twenty years up to the death of the Prophet in 632 A.D., i.e. ten years before Hegira and ten years after Hegira.[50]

The following was the first Revelation (sura 96, verses 1 to 5)[51].

"Read: In the name of thy Lord who created,
Who created man from something which clings
Read! Thy Lord is the most Noble
Who taught by the pen
Who taught man what he did not know."

Professor Hamidullah notes in the Introduction to his French translation of the Qur'an that one of the themes of this first Revelation was the 'praise of the pen as a means of human knowledge' which would 'explain the Prophet's concern for the preservation of the Qur'an in writing.'

Texts formally prove that long before the Prophet left Makka for Madina (i.e. long before Hegira), the Qur'anic text so far revealed had been written down. We shall see how the Qur'an is authentic in this. We know that Muhammad and the Believers who surrounded him were accustomed to reciting the revealed text from memory. It is therefore inconceivable for the Qur'an to refer to facts that did not square with reality because the latter could so easily be checked with people in the Prophet's following, by asking the authors of the transcription.

Four suras dating from a period prior to Hegira refer to the writing down of the Qur'an before the Prophet left Makka in 622 (sura 80, verses 11 to 16):

"By no means! Indeed it is a message of instruction
Therefore whoever wills, should remember
On leaves held in honor
Exalted, purified
In the hands of scribes
Noble and pious."

Yusuf Ali, in the commentary to his translation, 1934, wrote that when the Revelation of this sura was made, forty-two or forty-five others had been written and were kept by Muslims in Makka (out of a total of 114).

--Sura 85, verses 21 and 22:

"Nay, this is a glorious reading[52]
On a preserved tablet"

--Sura 56, verses 77 to 80:

"This is a glorious reading[52]
In a book well kept Which none but the purified teach.
This is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds."

--Sura 25, verse 5:

"They said: Tales of the ancients which he has caused to be written and they are dictated to him morning and evening." Here we have a reference to the accusations made by the Prophet's enemies who treated him as an imposter. They spread the rumour that stories of antiquity were being dictated to him and he was writing them down or having them transcribed (the meaning of the word is debatable, but one must remember that Muhammad was illiterate). However this may be, the verse refers to this act of making a written record which is pointed out by Muhammad's enemies themselves.

A sura that came after Hegira makes one last mention of the leaves on which these divine instructions were written:

--Sura 98, verses 2 and 3:

"An (apostle) from God recites leaves
Kept pure where are decrees right and straight."

The Qur'an itself therefore provides indications as to the fact that it was set down in writing at the time of the Prophet. It is a known fact that there were several scribes in his following, the most famous of whom, Zaid Ibn Thâbit, has left his name to posterity.

In the preface to his French translation of the Qur'an (1971), Professor Hamidullah gives an excellent description of the conditions that prevailed when the text of the Qur'an was written, lasting up until the time of the Prophet's death:

"The sources all agree in stating that whenever a fragment of the Qur'an was revealed, the Prophet called one of his literate companions and dictated it to him, indicating at the same time the exact position of the new fragment in the fabric of what had already been received . . . Descriptions note that Muhammad asked the scribe to reread to him what had been dictated so that he could correct any deficiencies . . . Another famous story tells how every year in the month of Ramadan, the Prophet would recite the whole of the Qur'an (so far revealed) to Gabriel . . . , that in the Ramadan preceding Muhammad's death, Gabriel had made him recite it twice . . . It is known how since the Prophet's time, Muslims acquired the habit of keeping vigil during Ramadan, and of reciting the whole of the Qur'an in addition to the usual prayers expected of them. Several sources add that Muhammad's scribe Zaid was present at this final bringing-together of the texts. Elsewhere, numerous other personalities are mentioned as well."

Extremely diverse materials were used for this first record: parchment, leather, wooden tablets, camels' scapula, soft stone for inscriptions, etc.

At the same time however, Muhammad recommended that the faithful learn the Qur'an by heart. They did this for a part if not all of the text recited during prayers. Thus there were *Hafizun* who knew the whole of the Qur'an by heart and spread it abroad. The method of doubly preserving the text both in writing and by memorization proved to be extremely precious.

Not long after the Prophet's death (632), his successor Abu Bakr, the first Caliph of Islam, asked Muhammad's former head scribe, Zaid Ibn Thâbit, to make a copy. this he did. On Omar's

initiative (the future second Caliph), Zaid consulted all the information he could assemble at Madina: the witness of the *Hafizun*, copies of the Book written on various materials belonging to private individuals, all with the object of avoiding possible errors in transcription. Thus an extremely faithful copy of the Book was obtained.

The sources tell us that Caliph Omar, Abu Bakr's successor in 634, subsequently made a single volume (*mushaf*) that he preserved and gave on his death to his daughter Hafsa, the Prophet's widow.

The third Caliph of Islam, Uthman, who held the caliphate from 644 to 655, entrusted a commission of experts with the preparation of the great recension that bears his name. It checked the authenticity of the document produced under Abu Bakr which had remained in Hafsa's possession until that time. The commission consulted Muslims who knew the text by heart. The critical analysis of the authenticity of the text was carried out very rigorously. The agreement of the witnesses was deemed necessary before the slightest verse containing debatable material was retained. It is indeed known how some verses of the Qur'an correct others in the case of prescriptions: this may be readily explained when one remembers that the Prophet's period of apostolic activity stretched over twenty years (in round figures). The result is a text containing an order of suras that reflects the order followed by the Prophet in his complete recital of the Qur'an during Ramadan, as mentioned above.

One might perhaps ponder the motives that led the first three Caliphs, especially Uthman, to commission collections and recensions of the text. The reasons are in fact very simple: Islam's expansion in the very first decades following Muhammad's death was very rapid indeed and it happened among peoples whose native language was not Arabic. It was absolutely necessary to ensure the spread of a text that retained its original purity. Uthman's recension had this as its objective.

Uthman sent copies of the text of the recension to the centres of the Islamic Empire and that is why, according to Professor Hamidullah, copies attributed to Uthman exist in Tashkent and Istanbul. Apart from one or two possible mistakes in copying, the oldest documents known to the present day, that are to be found throughout the Islamic world, are identical; the same is true for documents preserved in Europe (there are fragments in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris which, according to the experts, date from the Eighth and Ninth centuries A.D., i.e. the Second and Third Hegirian centuries). The numerous ancient texts that are known to be in existence all agree except for very minor variations which do not change the general meaning of the text at all. If the context sometimes allows more than one interpretation, it may well have to do with the fact that ancient writing was simpler than that of the present day.[53]

The 114 suras were arranged in decreasing order of length; there were nevertheless exceptions. The chronological sequence of the Revelation was not followed. In the majority of cases however, this sequence is known. A large number of descriptions are mentioned at several points in the text, sometimes giving rise to repetitions. Very frequently a passage will add details to a description that appears elsewhere in an incomplete form. Everything connected with modern science is, like many subjects dealt with in the Qur'an, scattered throughout the book without any semblance of classification.

* It is important to say that Qur'an was collected during the Prophet's lifetime. The Prophet, and before his death, had showed the collection of Qur'an scrolls to Gabriel many times. So, what is said in regard to collecting of Qur'an during the ruling period of the Caliphs after the Prophet means copying the same original copy written in the Prophet's life which later were sent to different countries, and it does not mean the recording or writing of Qur'an through oral sources as it may be thought. Yet, many of the Companions have written the Qur'an exactly during the lifetime of the Prophet. One of those was Imam Ali's copy. He, because of his close relation with the Prophet, his long companionship, didn't only collect the dispersed scrolls of the Qur'an, but he rather could accompany it with a remarkable Tafseer, mentioning the occasion of each verse's descension, and was regarded the first Tafseer of Qur'an since the beginning of the Islamic mission. Ibn Abi Al-Hadeed says, "All the scholars agree that Imam Ali is the first one who collected the Qur'an," (see Sharhul Nahj, 271). Another one, Kittani, says that Imam Ali could arrange the Qur'an according to each surah's order of descension, (see Strategic Administration, 461). Ibn Sireen Tabe'ee relates from 'Ikrimah, who said that 'Imam Ali could collect the Qur'an in a manner that if all mankind and jinn gathered to do that, they could not do it at all,' (see al-Itqan 1157-58). Ibn Jizzi Kalbi also narrates, "If only we could have the Qur'an which was collected by Ali then we could gain a lot of knowledge," (see al-Tasheel, 114). That was only a brief note about the benefits of Imam Ali's Mus'haf, as Ibn Sireen had declared, "I searched so long for Imam Ali's Mus'haf and I corresponded with Medina, but all my efforts gone in vain." (see al-Itqan, 1/58, al-Tabaqat, 2/338). Thus; it becomes certain that Qur'an has been collected by Imam Ali without simple difference between it and other known copies, except in the notes mentioned by him which renders it as the most excellent copy has ever been known. Unfortunately, the inconvenient political conditions emerged after the demise of the Prophet, (i.e. after the wicked issue of Saqeefah) was a main obstacle to get benefits from that remarkable copy of the Qur'an.

The Creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

DIFFERENCES FROM AND RESEMBLANCES TO THE BIBLICAL DESCRIPTION.

In contrast to the Old Testament, the Qur'an does not provide a unified description of the Creation. Instead of a continuous narration, there are passages scattered all over the Book which deal with certain aspects of the Creation and provide information on the successive events marking its development with varying degrees of detail. To gain a clear idea of how these events are presented, the fragments scattered throughout a large number of suras have to be brought together.

This dispersal throughout the Book of references to the same subject is not unique to the theme of the Creation. Many important subjects are treated in the same manner in the Qur'an: earthly or

celestial phenomena, or problems concerning man that are of interest to scientists. For each of these themes, the same effort has been made here to bring all the verses together.

For many European commentators, the description of the Creation in the Qur'an is very similar to the one in the Bible and they are quite content to present the two descriptions side by side. I believe this concept is mistaken because there are very obvious differences. On subjects that are by no means unimportant from a scientific point of view, we find statements in the Qur'an whose equivalents we search for in vain in the Bible. The latter contains descriptions that have no equivalent in the Qur'an.

The obvious resemblances between the two texts are well known; among them is the fact that, at first glance, the number given to the successive stages of the Creation is identical: the six days in the Bible correspond to the six days in the Qur'an. In fact however, the problem is more complex than this and it is worth pausing to examine it.

The Six Periods of the Creation.

There is absolutely no ambiguity whatsoever in the Biblical[54] description of the Creation in six days followed by a day of rest, the sabbath, analogous with the days of the week. It has been shown how this mode of narration practiced by the priests of the Sixth century B.C. served the purpose of encouraging the people to observe the sabbath. All Jews were expected to rest[55] on the sabbath as the Lord had done after he had laboured during the six days of the week.

The way the Bible interprets it, the word 'day' means the interval of time between two successive sunrises or sunsets for an inhabitant of the Earth. When defined in this way, the day is conditioned by the rotation of the Earth on its own axis. It is obvious that logically-speaking there can be no question of 'days' as defined just now, if the mechanism that causes them to appear-i.e. the existence of the Earth and its rotation around the Sun-has not already been fixed in the early stages of the Creation according to the Biblical description. This impossibility has already been emphasized in the first part of the present book.

When we refer to the majority of translations of the Qur'an, we read that-analogous with the Biblical description-the process of the Creation for the Islamic Revelation also took place over a period of six days. It is difficult to hold against the translators the fact that they have translated the Arabic word by its most common meaning. This is how it is usually expressed in translations so that in the Qur'an, verse 54, sura 7 reads as follows:

"Your Lord is God Who created the heavens and the earth in six days."

There are very few translations and commentaries of the Qur'an that note how the word 'days' should really be taken to mean 'periods'. It has moreover been maintained that if the Qur'anic texts on the Creation divided its stages into 'days', it was with the deliberate intention of taking up beliefs held by all the Jews and Christians at the dawn of Islam and of avoiding a head-on confrontation with such a widely-held belief.

Without in any way wishing to reject this way of seeing it, one could perhaps examine the problem a little more closely and scrutinize *in the Qur'an itself*, and more generally in the language of the time, the possible meaning of the word that many translators themselves still continue to translate by the word 'day' *yaum*, plural *ayyam* in Arabic.[56]

Its most common meaning is 'day' but it must be stressed that it tends more to mean the diurnal light than the length of time that lapses between one day's sunset and the next. The plural *ayyam* can mean, not just 'days', but also 'long length of time', an indefinite period of time (but always long). The meaning 'period of time' that the word contains is to be found elsewhere in the Qur'an. Hence the following:

--sura 32, verse 5:

". . . in a period of time (*yaum*) whereof the measure is a thousand years of your reckoning." (It is to be noted that the Creation in six periods is precisely what the verse preceding verse 5 refers to).

--sura 70, verse 4:

". . . in a period of time (*yaum*) whereof the measure is 50,000 years."

The fact that the word , *yaum*' could mean a period of time that was quite different from the period that we mean by the word 'day' struck very early commentators who, of course, did not have the knowledge we possess today concerning the length of the stages in the formation of the Universe. In the Sixteenth century A.D. for example, Abu al Su'ud, who could not have had any idea of the day as defined astronomically in terms of the Earth's rotation, thought that for the Creation a division must be considered that was not into days as we usually understand the word, but into 'events' (in Arabic *nauba*).

Modern commentators have gone back to this interpretation. Yusuf Ali (1934), in his commentary on each of the verses that deals with the stages in the Creation, insists on the importance of taking the word, elsewhere interpreted as meaning 'days', to mean in reality 'very long Periods, or Ages, or Aeons'.

It is therefore possible to say that in the case of the Creation of the world, the Qur'an allows for long periods of time numbering six. It is obvious that modern science has not permitted man to establish the fact that the complicated stages in the process leading to the formation of the Universe numbered six, but it has clearly shown that long periods of time were involved compared to which 'days' as we conceive them would be ridiculous.

One of the longest passages of the Qur'an, which deals with the Creation, describes the latter by juxtaposing an account of earthly events and one of celestial events. The verses in question are verses 9 to 12, sura 41:

(God is speaking to the Prophet)

"Say. Do you disbelieve Him Who created the earth in two periods? Do you ascribe equals to Him. He is the Lord of the Worlds.

"He set in the (earth) mountains standing firm. He blessed it.

He measured therein its sustenance in four periods, in due proportion, in accordance with the needs of those who ask for (sustenance? or information?).

"Moreover (*tumma*) He turned to heaven when it was smoke and said to it and to the earth: come willingly or unwillingly! They said: we come in willing obedience.

"Then He ordained them seven heavens in two periods, and He assigned to each heaven its mandate by Revelation. And We adorned the lower heaven with luminaries and provided it a guard. Such is the decree of the All Mighty, the Full of Knowledge."

These four verses of sura 41 contain several points to which we shall return. the initially gaseous state of celestial matter and the highly symbolic definition of the number of heavens as seven. We shall see the meaning behind this figure. Also of a symbolic nature is the dialogue between God on the one hand and the primordial sky and earth on the other. here however it is only to express the submission of the Heavens and Earth, once they were formed, to divine orders.

Critics have seen in this passage a contradiction with the statement of the six periods of the Creation. By adding the two periods of the formation of the Earth to the four periods of the spreading of its sustenance to the inhabitants, plus the two periods of the formation of the Heavens, we arrive at eight periods. This would then be in contradiction with the six periods mentioned above.

In fact however, this text, which leads man to reflect on divine Omnipotence, beginning with the Earth and ending with the Heavens, provides two sections that are expressed by the Arabic word *tumma*, translated by 'moreover', but which also means 'furthermore' or 'then'. The sense of a 'sequence' may therefore be implied referring to a sequence of events or a series of man's reflections on the events mentioned here. It may equally be a simple reference to events juxtaposed without any intention of bringing in the notion of the one following the other. However this may be, the periods of the Creation of the Heavens may just as easily coincide with the two periods of the Earth's creation. A little later we shall examine how the basic process of the formation of the Universe is presented in the Qur'an and we shall see how it can be jointly applied to the Heavens and the Earth in keeping with modern ideas. We shall then realize how perfectly reasonable this way is of conceiving the simultaneous nature of the events here described.

There does not appear to be any contradiction between the passage quoted here and the concept of the formation of the world in six stages that is to be found in other texts in the Qur'an.

THE QUR'AN DOES NOT LAY DOWN A SEQUENCE FOR THE CREATION OF THE EARTH AND HEAVENS.

In the two passages from the Qur'an quoted above, reference was made in one of the verses to the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth (sura 7, verse 54) , and elsewhere to the Creation of the

Earth and the Heavens (sura 41, verses 9 to 12). The Qur'an does not therefore appear to lay down a sequence for the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The number of verses in which the Earth is mentioned first is quite small, e.g. sura 2, verse 29 and sura 20, verse 4, where a reference is made to "Him Who created the earth and the high heavens". The number of verses where the Heavens are mentioned before the Earth is, on the other hand, much larger: (sura 7, verse 54; sura 10, verse 3; sura 11, verse 7; sura 25, verse 59; sura 32, verse 4; sura 50, verse 38; sura 57, verse 4; sura 79, verses 27 to 33; sura 91, verses 5 to 10).

In actual fact, apart from sura 79, there is not a single passage in the Qur'an that lays down a definite sequence; a simple coordinating conjunction (*wa*) meaning 'and' links two terms, or the word *tumma* which, as has been seen in the above passage, can indicate either a simple juxtaposition or a sequence.

There appears to me to be only one passage in the Qur'an where a definite sequence is plainly established between different events in the Creation. It is contained in verses 27 to 33, sura 79:

"Are you the harder to create Or. is it the heaven that (God) built? He raised its canopy and fashioned it with harmony. He made dark the night and he brought out the forenoon. And after that (*ba' da dalika*) He spread it out. Therefrom he drew out its water and its pasture. And the mountains He has fixed firmly. Goods for you and your cattle."

This list of earthly gifts from God to man, which is expressed in a language suited to farmers or nomads on the Arabian Peninsula, is preceded by an invitation to reflect on the creation of the heavens. The reference to the stage when God spreads out the earth and renders it arable is very precisely situated in time after the alternating of night and day has been achieved. Two groups are therefore referred to here, one of celestial phenomena, and the other of earthly phenomena articulated in time. The reference made here implies that the earth must necessarily have existed before being spread out and that it consequently existed when God created the Heavens. The idea of a *concomitance* therefore arises from the heavenly and earthly evolutions with the interlocking of the two phenomena. Hence, one must not look for any special significance in the reference in the Qur'anic text to the Creation of the Earth before the Heavens or the Heavens before the Earth: the position of the words does not influence the order in which the Creation took place, unless however it is specifically stated.

THE BASIC PROCESS OF THE FORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE RESULTING COMPOSITION OF THE WORLDS.

The Qur'an presents in two verses a brief synthesis of the phenomena that constituted the basic process of the formation of the Universe.

--sura 21, verse 30:

"Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then We clove them asunder and We got every living thing out of the water. Will they not then believe?"

--sura 41, verse 11. God orders the Prophet to speak after inviting him to reflect on the subject of the earth's creation:

"Moreover (God) turned to the Heaven when it was smoke and said to it and to the earth . . ."
There then follow the orders to submit, referred to on page 136.

We shall come back to the aquatic origins of life and examine them along with other biological problems raised by the Qur'an. The important things to remember at present are the following. a) The statement of the existence of a gaseous mass with fine particles, for this is how the word 'smoke' (*dukan* in Arabic) is to be interpreted. Smoke is generally made -up of a gaseous substratum, plus, in more or less stable suspension, fine particles that may belong to solid and even liquid states of matter at high or low temperature;

b) The reference to a separation process (*fatq*) of an primary single mass whose elements were initially fused together (*ratq*). It must be noted that in Arabic '*fatq*' is the action of breaking, diffusing, separating, and that '*ratq*' is the action of fusing or binding together elements to make a homogenous whole.

This concept of the separation of a whole into several parts is noted in other passages of the Book with reference to multiple worlds. The first verse of the first sura in the Qur'an proclaims, after the opening invocation, the following: "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful", "Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds."

The terms 'worlds' reappears dozens of times in the Qur'an. The Heavens are referred to as multiple as well, not only on account of their plural form, but also because of their symbolic numerical quantity. 7.

This number is used 24 times throughout the Qur'an for various numerical quantities. It often carries the meaning of 'many' although we do not know exactly why this meaning of the figure was used. The Greeks and Romans also seem to have used the number 7 to mean an undefined idea of plurality. In the Qur'an, the number 7 refers to the Heavens themselves (*samawat*). It alone is understood to mean 'Heavens'. The 7 roads of the Heavens are mentioned once:

--sura 2, verse 29:

"(God) is the One Who created for you all that is on the earth. Moreover He turned to the heaven and fashioned seven heavens with harmony. He is Full of Knowledge of all things."

--sura 23, verse 17:

"And We have created above you seven paths. We have never been unmindful of the Creation."

--sura 67, verse 3:

"(God) is the One Who created seven heavens one above an other. Thou canst see no fault in the creation of the Beneficent. Turn the vision again! Canst thou see any rift?"

--sura 71, verse 15-16:

"Did you see how God created seven heavens one above another and made the moon a light therein and made the sun a lamp?[57]"

--sura 78, verse 12:

"We have built above you seven strong (heavens) and placed a blazing lamp."

Here the blazing lamp is the Sun.

The commentators on the Qur'an are in agreement on all these verses: the number 7 means no more than plurality.[58]

There are therefore many Heavens and Earths, and it comes as no small surprise to the reader of the Qur'an to find that earths such as our own may be found in the Universe, a fact that has not yet been verified by man in our time.

Verse 12 of sura 65 does however predict the following:

"God is the One Who created seven heavens and of the earth (*ard*) a similar number. The Command descends among them so that you know that God has power over all things and comprehends all things in His knowledge."

Since 7 indicates an indefinite plurality (as we have seen), it is possible to conclude that the Qur'anic text clearly indicates the existence of more than one single Earth, our own Earth (*ard*); there are others like it in the Universe.

Another observation which may surprise the Twentieth century reader of the Qur'an is the fact that verses refer to three groups of things created, i.e.

--things in the Heavens.

--things on the Earth

--things between the Heavens and the Earth

Here are several of these verses:

--sura 20, verse 6;

"To Him (God) belongs what is in the heavens, on earth, between them and beneath the soil."

--sura 25, verse 59:

". . . the One Who created the heavens, the earth and what is between them in six periods."

--sura 32, verse 4:

"God is the One Who created the heavens, the earth and what is between them in six periods."

--sura 50, verse 38:

"We created the heavens, the earth .and what is between them in six periods, and no weariness touched Us."[59]

The reference in the Qur'an to 'what is between the Heavens and the Earth' is again to be found in the following verses: sura 21, verse 16; sura 44, verses 7 and 38 ; sura 78, verse 37; sura 15, verse 85; sura 46, verse 3; sura 43, Verse 85.

This Creation outside the Heavens and outside the Earth, mentioned several times, is a priori difficult to imagine. To understand these verses, reference must be made to the most recent human observations on the existence of cosmic extra-galactic material and one must indeed go back to ideas established by contemporary science on the formation of the Universe, starting with the simplest and proceeding to the most complex. These are the subject of the following paragraph.

Before passing on to these purely scientific matters however, it is advisable to recapitulate the main points on which the Qur'an gives us information about the Creation. According to the preceding quotations, they are as follows:

- 1) Existence of six periods for the Creation in general.
- 2) Interlocking of stages in the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth.
- 3) Creation of the Universe out of an initially unique mass forming a block that subsequently split up.
- 4) Plurality of the Heavens and of the Earths.
- 5) Existence of an intermediary creation 'between the Heavens and the Earth'.

SOME MODERN SCIENTIFIC DATA CONCERNING THE FORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE.

The Solar System.

The Earth and planets rotating around the Sun constitute an organized world of dimensions which, to our human scale, appear quite colossal. The Earth is, after all, roughly 93 million miles from the Sun. This is a very great distance for a human being, but it is very small in comparison to the distance separating the Sun from the furthestmost planet from it in the solar system (Pluto); in round numbers it is 40 times the distance from the Earth to the Sun, i.e. approximately 3,672 million miles away. This distance, when doubled, represents the largest dimension of our solar system. The Sun's light takes nearly 6 hours to reach Pluto, and yet the journey is made at the terrifying speed of over 186,000 miles per second. The light coming from stars on the very confines of the known celestial world therefore takes billions of years to reach us.

The Galaxies.

The Sun, of which we are a satellite like the other planets surrounding it, is itself an infinitesimally small element among a hundred billion stars that form a whole, called a galaxy. On a fine summer night, the whole of space seems to be filled with stars that make up what is known as the Milky Way. This group has extremely large dimensions. Whereas light could cross the solar system in units of one hour, it would require something like 90,000 years to go from one extreme to the other of the most compact group of stars that make up our galaxy.

The galaxy that we belong to however, even though it is so incredibly huge, is only a small part of the Heavens. There are giant agglomerates of stars similar to the Milky Way that lie outside our galaxy. They were discovered a little over fifty years ago, when astronomy was able to make use of an optical instrument as sophisticated as the one that made possible the construction of the Mount Wilson telescope in the United States. Thus a very large number indeed of isolated galaxies and masses of galaxies have been discovered that are so far away that it was necessary to institute a special unit of light-years, the 'parsec' (the distance light travels in 3.26 years at 186,000 miles per second).

Formation and Evolution of Galaxies, Stars and Planetary Systems.

What was there originally in the immensely large space the galaxies now occupy? Modern science can only answer this question as of a certain period in the evolution of the Universe; it cannot put into numbers the length of time that separates this period from us.

At the earliest time it can provide us with, modern science has every reason to maintain that the Universe was formed of a gaseous mass principally composed of hydrogen and a certain amount of helium that was slowly rotating. This nebula subsequently split up into multiple fragments with very large dimensions and masses, so large indeed, that specialists in astrophysics are able to estimate their mass from 1 to 100 billion times the present mass of the Sun (the latter represents a mass that is over 300,000 times that of the Earth). These figures give an idea of the large size of the fragments of primary gaseous mass that were to give birth to the galaxies.

A new fragmentation was to form the stars. There then followed the intervention of a condensing process where gravitational forces came into play, (since these bodies were moving and rotating more and more quickly), along with pressures and the influence of magnetic fields and of radiations. The stars became shiny as they contracted and transformed the gravitational forces into thermal energy. Thermonuclear reactions came into play, and heavier atoms were formed by fusion at the expense of others that were lighter; this is how the transition was made from hydrogen to helium, then to carbon and oxygen, ending with metals and metalloids. Thus the stars have a life of their own and modern astronomy classifies them according to their present stage of evolution. The stars also have a death; in the final stage of their evolution, the violent implosion of certain stars has been observed so that they become veritable 'corpses'.

The planets, and in particular the Earth, originated in a separation process starting from an initial constituent that in the beginning was the primary nebula. A fact that has no longer been contested for over twenty-five years is that the Sun condensed inside the single nebula and that the planets did the same inside the surrounding nebular disc. One must stress-and this is of

prime importance for. the subject in hand-that there was no sequence in the formation of the celestial elements such as the Sun nor in the formation of an earthly. element. There is an evolutionary parallelism with the identity of origin.

Here, science can give us information on the period during which the events just mentioned took place. Having estimated the age of our galaxy at roughly ten billion years, according to this hypothesis, the formation of the solar. system took place a little over five billion years later'. The study of natural radio activity makes it possible to place the age of the Earth and the time the Sun was formed at 4.5 billion years ago, to within a present-day accuracy of 100 million years, according to some scientists' calculations. This accuracy is to be admired, since 100 million years may represent a long time to us but the ratio 'maximum error/total time-to-be-measured' is $0.1/4.5$, i.e. 2.2%.

Specialists in astrophysics have therefore attained a high degree of knowledge concerning the general process involved in the formation of the solar system. It may be summarized as follows: condensation and contraction of a rotating gaseous mass, splitting up into fragments that leave the Sun. and planets in their places, among them the Earth.[60] The knowledge that science has gained on the primary nebula and the way it split up into an incommensurable quantity of stars grouped into galaxies leaves absolutely no doubt as to the legitimacy of a concept of the plurality of worlds. It does not however provide any kind of certainty concerning the existence in the Universe of anything that might, either closely or vaguely, resemble the Earth.

The Concept of the Plurality of the Worlds.

In spite of the above, modern specialists in astrophysics consider it highly likely that planets similar to Earth are present in the Universe. As far as the solar system is concerned, nobody seriously entertains the possibility of finding general conditions similar to those on Earth on another planet in this system. We must therefore seek for them outside the solar system. The likelihood of their existing outside it is considered quite probable for the following reasons:

It is thought that in our galaxy half of the 100 billion stars must, like the Sun, have a planetary system. The fifty billion stars do indeed, like the Sun, rotate very slowly. a characteristic which suggests that they are surrounded by planets that are their satellites. These stars are so far away that the possible planets are unobservable, but their existence is thought to be highly probable on account of certain trajectory characteristics ; a slight undulation of the star's trajectory indicates the presence of a companion planetary satellite. Thus the Barnard Star probably has at least one planetary companion with a mass greater than that of Jupiter and may even have two satellites. As P. Guérin writes: "All the evidence points to the fact that planetary systems are scattered in profusion all over the universe. The solar system and the Earth are not unique." And as a corollary. "Life, like the planets that harbour it, is scattered throughout the universe, in those places where the physico-chemical conditions necessary for its flowering and development are to be found."

Interstellar Material.

The basic process in the formation of the Universe therefore lay in the condensation of material in the primary nebula followed by its division into fragments that originally constituted galactic masses. The latter in their turn split up into stars that provided the sub-product of the process, i.e. the planets. These successive separations left among the groups of principle elements what one might perhaps call 'remains'. Their more scientific name is 'interstellar galactic material'. It has been described in various ways; there are bright nebulae that reflect the light received from other stars and are perhaps composed of 'dusts' or 'smokes', to use the terminology of experts in astrophysics, and then there are the dark nebulae that are less dense, consisting of interstellar material that is even more modest, known for its tendency to interfere with photometric measurements in astronomy. There can be no doubt about the existence of 'bridges' of material between the galaxies themselves. Although these gases may be very rarefied, the fact that they occupy such a colossal space, in view of the great distance separating the galaxies, could make them correspond to a mass possibly greater than the total mass of the galaxies in spite of the low density of the former. A. Boichot considers the presence of these intergalactic masses to be of prime importance which could "considerably alter ideas on the evolution of the Universe."

We must now go back to the basic ideas on the Creation of the Universe that were taken from the Qur'an and look at them in the light of modern scientific data.

CONFRONTATION WITH THE DATA IN THE QUR'AN CONCERNING THE CREATION.

We shall examine the five main points on which the Qur'an gives information about the Creation.

1) The six periods of the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth covered, according to the Qur'an, the formation of the celestial bodies and the Earth, and the development of the latter until (with its 'sustenance') it became inhabitable by man. In the case of the Earth, the events described in the Qur'an happened over four periods. One could perhaps see in them the four geological periods described by modern science, with man's appearance, as we already know, taking place in the quaternary era. This is purely a hypothesis since nobody has an answer to this question.

It must be noted however, that the formation of the heavenly bodies and the Earth, as explained in verses 9 to 12, sura 41 (see page 136) required two phases. If we take the Sun and its subproduct the Earth as an example (the only one accessible to us), science informs us that their formation occurred by a process of condensation of the primary nebula and then their separation. This is exactly what the Qur'an expresses very clearly when it refers to the processes that produced a fusion and subsequent separation starting from a celestial 'smoke'. Hence there is complete correspondence between the facts of the Qur'an and the facts of science.

2) Science showed the interlocking of the two stages in the formation of a star (like the Sun) and its satellite (like the Earth). This interconnection is surely very evident in the text of the Qur'an examined.

3) The existence at an early stage of the Universe of the 'smoke' referred to in the Qur'an, meaning the predominantly gaseous state of the material that composes it, obviously corresponds to the concept of the primary nebula put forward by modern science.

4) The plurality of the heavens, expressed in the Qur'an by the number 7, whose meaning we have discussed, is confirmed by modern science due to the observations experts in astrophysics have made on galactic systems and their very large number. On the other hand the plurality of earths that are similar to ours (from certain points of view at least) is an idea that arises in the text of the Qur'an but has not yet been demonstrated to be true by science; all the same, specialists consider this to be quite feasible.

5) The existence of an intermediate creation between 'the Heavens' and 'the Earth' expressed in the Qur'an may be compared to the discovery of those bridges of material present outside organized astronomic systems.

Although not all the questions raised by the descriptions in the Qur'an have been completely confirmed by scientific data, there is in any case absolutely no opposition between the data in the Qur'an on the Creation and modern knowledge on the formation of the Universe. This fact is worth stressing for the Qur'anic Revelation, whereas it is very obvious indeed that the present-day text of the Old Testament provides data on the same events that are unacceptable from a scientific point of view. It is hardly surprising, since the description of the Creation in the Sacerdotal version of the Bible[61] was written by priests at the time of the deportation to Babylon who had the legalist intentions already described and therefore compiled a description that fitted their theological views. The existence of such an enormous difference between the Biblical description and the data in the Qur'an concerning the Creation is worth underlining once again on account of the totally gratuitous accusations leveled against Muhammad since the beginnings of Islam to the effect that he copied the Biblical descriptions. As far as the Creation is concerned, this accusation is totally unfounded. *How could a man living fourteen hundred years ago have made corrections to the existing description to such an extent that he eliminated scientifically inaccurate material and, on his own initiative, made statements that science has been able to verify only in the present day? This hypothesis is completely untenable. The description of the Creation given in the Qur'an is quite different from the one in the Bible.*

ANSWERS TO CERTAIN OBJECTIONS

Indisputably, resemblances do exist between narrations dealing with other subjects, particularly religious history, in the Bible and in the Qur'an. It is moreover interesting to note from this point of view how nobody holds against Jesus the fact that he takes up the same sort of facts and Biblical teachings. This does not, of course, stop people in the West from accusing Muhammad of referring to such facts in his teaching with the suggestion that he is an imposter because he presents them as a Revelation. As for the proof that Muhammad reproduced in the Qur'an what he had been told or dictated by the rabbis, it has no more substance than the statement that a Christian monk gave him a sound religious education. One would do well to re-read what R. Blachère in his book, *The Problem of Muhammad* (Le Problème de Mahomet)[62], has to say about this 'fable'.

A hint of a resemblance is also advanced between other statements in the Qur'an and beliefs that go back a very long way, probably much further in time than the Bible.

More generally speaking, the traces of certain cosmogonic myths have been sought in the Holy Scriptures; for example the belief held by the Polynesians in the existence of primeval waters that were covered in darkness until they separated when light appeared; thus Heaven and Earth were formed. This myth is compared to the description of the Creation in the Bible, where there is undoubtedly a resemblance. It would however be superficial to then accuse the Bible of having copied this from the cosmogonic myth.

It is just as superficial to see the Qur'anic concept of the division of the primeval material constituting the Universe at its initial stage-a concept held by modern science-as one that comes from various cosmogonic myths in one form or another that express something resembling it.

It is worth analysing these mythical beliefs and descriptions more closely. Often an initial idea appears among them which is reasonable in itself, and is in some cases borne out by what we today know (or think we know) to be true, except that fantastic descriptions are attached to it in the myth. This is the case of the fairly widespread concept of the Heavens and the Earth originally being united then subsequently separated. When, as in Japan, the image of the egg plus an expression of chaos is attached to the above with the idea of a seed inside the egg (as for all eggs), the imaginative addition makes the concept lose all semblance of seriousness. In other countries, the idea of a plant is associated with it; the plant grows and in so doing raises up the sky and separates the Heavens from the Earth. Here again, the imaginative quality of the added detail lends the myth its very distinctive character. Nevertheless a common characteristic remains, i.e. the notion of a single mass at the beginning of the evolutionary process leading to the formation of the Universe which then divided to form the various 'worlds' that we know today.

The reason these cosmogonic myths are mentioned here is to underline the way they have been embroidered by man's imagination and to show the basic difference between them and the statements in the Qur'an on the same subject. The latter are free from any of the whimsical details accompanying such beliefs; on the contrary, they are distinguished by the sober quality of the words in which they are made and their agreement with scientific data.

Such statements in the Qur'an concerning the Creation, which appeared nearly fourteen centuries ago, obviously do not lend themselves to a human explanation.

Astronomy in the Qur'an

The Qur'an is full of reflections on the Heavens. In the preceding chapter on the Creation, we saw how the plurality of the Heavens and Earths was referred to, as well as what the Qur'an calls an intermediary creation 'between the Heavens and the Earth', modern science has verified the latter. The verses referring to the Creation already contain a broad idea of what is to be found in the heavens, i.e. of everything outside the earth.

Apart from the verses that specifically describe the Creation, there are roughly another forty verses in the Qur'an which provide information on astronomy complementing what has already been given. Some of them are not much more than reflections on the glory of the Creator, the Organizer of all the stellar and planetary systems. These we know to be arranged according to balancing positions whose stability Newton explained in his law of the mutual attraction of bodies.

The first verses to be quoted here hardly furnish much material for scientific analysis: the aim is simply to draw attention to God's Omnipotence. They must be mentioned however to give a realistic idea of the way the Qur'anic text described the organization of the Universe fourteen centuries ago.

These references constitute a new fact of divine Revelation. The organization of the world is treated in neither the Gospels nor the Old Testament (except for a few notions whose general inaccuracy we have already seen in the Biblical description of the Creation). The Qur'an however deals with this subject in depth. What it describes is important, but so is what it does not contain. It does not in fact provide an account of the theories prevalent *at the time* of the Revelation that deal with the organization of the celestial world, theories that science was later to show were inaccurate. An example of this will be given later. This negative consideration must however be pointed out.[63]

A. GENERAL REFLECTIONS CONCERNING THE SKY.

--sura 50, verse 6. The subject is man in general.

"Do they not look at the sky above them, how We have built it and adorned it, and there are no rifts in it."

--sura 31, verse 10:

"(God) created the heavens without any pillars that you can see..."

--sura 13, verse 2:

"God is the One Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see, then He firmly established Himself on the throne and He subjected the sun and moon . . ."

These two verses refute the belief that the vault of the heavens was held up by pillars, the only things preventing the former from crushing the earth.

--sura 55, verse 7:

"the sky (God) raised it . . ."

--sura 22, verse 65:

"(God) holds back the sky from falling on the earth unless by His leave . . ."

It is known how the remoteness of celestial masses at great distance and in proportion to the magnitude of their mass itself constitutes the foundation of their equilibrium. The more remote the masses are, the weaker the force is that attracts one to the other. The nearer they are, the

stronger the attraction is that one has to the other: this is true for the Moon, which is near to the Earth (astronomically speaking) and exercises an influence by laws of attraction on the position occupied by the waters of the sea, hence the phenomenon of the tides. If two celestial bodies come too close to one another, collision is inevitable. The fact that they are subjected to an order is the *sine qua non* for the absence of disturbances.

The subjection of the Heavens to divine order is often referred to as well:

--sura 23, verse 86. God is speaking to the Prophet.

"Say: Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the tremendous throne?"

We have already seen how by 'seven heavens' what is meant is not 7, but an indefinite number of Heavens.

--sura 45, verse 13:

"For you (God) subjected all that is in the heavens and on the earth, all from Him. Behold! In that are signs for people who reflect."

--sura 55, verse 5:

"The sun and moon (are subjected) to calculations"

--sura 6, verse 96:

"(God) appointed the night for rest and the sun and the moon for reckoning."

--sura 14, verse 33:

"For you (God) subjected the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses. And for you He subjected the night and the day."

Here one verse completes another: the calculations referred to result in the regularity of the course described by the heavenly bodies in question, this is expressed by the word *da'ib*, the present participle of a verb whose original meaning was 'to work eagerly and assiduously at something'. Here it is given the meaning of 'to apply oneself to something with care in a perseverant, invariable manner, in accordance with set habits'.

--sura 36, verse 39: God is speaking:

"And for the moon We have appointed mansions till she returns like an old shriveled palm branch."

This is a reference to the curled form of the palm branch which, as it shrivels up, takes on the moon's crescent. This commentary will be completed later.

--sura 16, verse 12:

"For you (God) subjected the night and the day, the sun and the moon; the stars are in subjection to His Command. Verily in this are signs for people who are wise."

The practical angle from which this perfect celestial order is seen is underlined on account of its value as an aid to man's travel on earth and by sea, and to his calculation of time. This comment becomes clear when one bears in mind the fact that the Qur'an was originally a preaching addressed to men who only understood the simple language of their everyday lives. This explains the presence of the following reflections.

--sura 6, verse 97:

"(God) is the One Who has set out for you the stars, that you may guide yourselves by them through the darkness of the land and of the sea. We have detailed the signs for people who know."

--sura 16, verse 16:

"(God sets on the earth) landmarks and by the stars (men) guide themselves."

--sura 10, verse 5:

"God is the One Who made the sun a shining glory and the moon a light and for her ordained mansions, so that you might know the number of years and the reckoning (of the time). God created this in truth. He explains the signs in detail for people who know."

This calls for some comment. Whereas the Bible calls the Sun and Moon 'lights', and merely adds to one the adjective 'greater' and to the other 'lesser', the Qur'an ascribes differences other than that of dimension to each respectively. Agreed, this is nothing more than a verbal distinction, but how was one to communicate to men at this time without confusing them, while at the same time expressing the notion that the Sun and Moon were not absolutely identical 'lights'?

B. NATURE OF HEAVENLY BODIES.

The Sun and the Moon.

The Sun is a shining glory (*diya'*) and the Moon a light (*nur*). This translation would appear to be more correct than those given by others, where the two terms are inverted. In fact there is little difference in meaning since *diya'* belongs to a root (*dw'*) which, according to Kazimirski's authoritative Arabic/French dictionary, means 'to be bright, to shine' (e.g. like a fire). The same author attributes to the substantive in question the meaning of 'light'.

The difference between Sun and Moon will be made clearer by further quotes from the Qur'an.

--sura 25, verse 61:

"Blessed is the One Who placed the constellations in heaven and placed therein a lamp and a moon giving light."

--sura 71, 15-16:

"Did you see how God created seven heavens one above another and made the moon a light therein and made the sun a lamp?"

--sura 78, verses 12-13:

"We have built above you seven strong (heavens) and placed a blazing lamp."

The blazing lamp is quite obviously the sun.

Here the moon is defined as a body that gives light (*munir*) from the same root as *nur* (the light applied to the Moon). The Sun however is compared to a torch (*siraj*) or a blazing (*wahhaj*) lamp.

A man of Muhammad's time could easily distinguish between the Sun, a blazing heavenly body well known to the inhabitants of the desert, and the Moon, the body of the cool of the night. The comparisons found in the Qur'an on this subject are therefore quite normal. What is interesting to note here is the sober quality of the comparisons, and the absence in the text of the Qur'an of any elements of comparison that might have prevailed at the time and which in our day would appear as phantasmagorical.

It is known that the Sun is a star that generates intense heat and light by its internal combustions, and that the Moon, which does not give off light itself, and is an inert body (on its external layers at least) merely reflects the light received from the Sun.

There is nothing in the text of the Qur'an that contradicts what we know today about these two celestial bodies.

The Stars.

As we know, the stars are heavenly bodies like the Sun. They are the scene of various physical phenomena of which the easiest to observe is their generation of light. They are heavenly bodies that produce their own light.

The word 'star' appears thirteen times in the Qur'an (*najm*, plural *nujum*); it comes from a root meaning to appear, to come into sight. The word designates a visible heavenly body without saying of what kind, i.e. either generator of light or mere reflector of light received. To make it clear that the object so designated is a star, a qualifying phrase is added as in the following sura:

--sura 86, verses 1-3:

"By the sky and the Night-Visitor, who will tell thee what the Night-Visitor is, the Star of piercing brightness." [64]

The evening star is qualified in the Qur'an by the word *takib* meaning 'that which pierces through something' (here the night shadows). The same word is moreover used to designate shooting stars (sura 37, verse 10): the latter are the result of combustion.

The Planets.

It is difficult to say whether these are referred to in the Qur'an with the same exact meaning that is given to the heavenly bodies in the present day.

The planets do not have their own light. They revolve around the Sun, Earth being one of them. While one may presume that others exist elsewhere, the only ones known are those in the solar system.

Five planets other than Earth were known to the ancients: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Three have been discovered in recent times: Uranus, Neptune and Pluto.

The Qur'an would seem to designate these by the word *kaukab* (plural *kawakib*) without stating their number. Joseph's dream (sum 12) refers to eleven of them, but the description is, by definition, an imaginary one.

A good definition of the meaning of the word *kaukab* in the Qur'an Seems to have been given in a very famous verse. The eminently spiritual nature of its deeper meaning stands forth, and is moreover the subject of much debate among experts in exegesis. It is nevertheless of great interest to offer an account of the comparison it contains on the subject of the word that would seem to designate a 'planet'.

Here is the text in question: (sura 24, verse 35)

"God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as if there were a niche and within it a luminary. The luminary is in a glass. The glass is as if it were a planet glittering like a pearl."

Here the subject is the projection of light onto a body that reflects it (glass) and gives it the glitter of a pearl, like a planet that is lit by the sun. This is the only explanatory detail referring to this word to be found in the Qur'an.

The word is quoted in other verses. In some of them it is difficult to distinguish which heavenly bodies are meant (sura 6, verse 76; sura 82, verses 1-2).

In one verse however, when seen in the light of modern science, it would seem very much that these can only be the heavenly bodies that we know to be planets. In sura 37, verse 6, we see the following:

"We have indeed adorned the lowest heaven with an ornament, the planets."

Is it possible that the expression in the Qur'an 'lowest heaven' means the 'solar system'? It is known that among the celestial elements nearest to us, there are no other permanent elements apart from the planets: the Sun is the only star in the system that bears its name. It is difficult to see what other heavenly bodies could be meant if not the planets. The translation given would

therefore seem to be correct and the Qur'an to refer to the existence of the planets as defined in modern times.

The Lowest Heaven.

The Qur'an mentions the lowest heaven several times along with the heavenly bodies of which it is composed. The first among these would seem to be the planets, as we have just seen. When however the Qur'an associates material notions intelligible to us, enlightened as we are today by modern science, with statements of a purely spiritual nature, their meaning becomes obscure.

Thus the verse quoted could easily be understood, except that the following verse (7) of the same sura 37 speaks of a 'guard against every rebellious evil spirit', 'guard' again being referred to in sura 21, verse 32 and sura 41, verse 12, so that we are confronted by statements of quite a different kind.

What meaning can one attach moreover to the 'projectiles for the stoning of demons' that according to verse 5, sura 67 are situated in the lowest heaven? Do the 'luminaries' referred to in the same verse have something to do with the shooting stars mentioned above?[65]

All these observations seem to lie outside the subject of this study. They have been mentioned here for the sake of completeness. At the present stage however, it would seem that scientific data are unable to cast any light on a subject that goes beyond human understanding.

C. CELESTIAL ORGANIZATION.

The information the Qur'an provides on this subject mainly deals with the solar system. References are however made to phenomena that go beyond the solar system itself: they have been discovered in recent times.

There are two very important verses on the orbits of the Sun and Moon:

--sura 21, verse 33:

"(God is) the One Who created the night, the day, the sun and the moon. Each one is travelling in an orbit with its own motion."

--sura 36, verse 40:

"The sun must not catch up the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. Each one is travelling in an orbit with its own motion."

Here an essential fact is clearly stated: the existence of the Sun's and Moon's orbits, plus a reference is made to the travelling of these bodies in space with their own motion.

A negative fact also emerges from a reading of these verses: it is shown that the Sun moves in an orbit, but no indication is given as to what this orbit might be in relation to the Earth. At the time

of the Qur'anic Revelation, it was thought that the Sun moved while the Earth stood still. This was the system of geocentrism that had held sway since the time of Ptolemy, Second century B.C., and was to continue to do so until Copernicus in the Sixteenth century A.D. Although people supported this concept at the time of Muhammad, it does not appear anywhere in the Qur'an, either here or elsewhere.

The Existence of the Moon's and the Sun's Orbits.

The Arabic word *falak* has here been translated by the word 'orbit'. Many French translators of the Qur'an attach to it the meaning of a 'sphere'. This is indeed its initial sense. Hamidullah translates it by the word 'orbit'.

The word caused concern to older translators of the Qur'an who were unable to imagine the circular course of the Moon and the Sun and therefore retained images of their course through space that were either more or less correct, or hopelessly wrong. Si Hamza Boubekour in his translation of the Qur'an cites the diversity of interpretations given to it: "A sort of axle, like an iron rod, that a mill turns around; a celestial sphere, orbit, sign of the zodiac, speed, wave . . .", but he adds the following observation made by Tabari, the famous Tenth century commentator: "It is our duty to keep silent when we do not know." (XVII, 15). This shows just how incapable men were of understanding this concept of the Sun's and Moon's orbit. It is obvious that if the word had expressed an astronomical concept common in Muhammad's day, it would not have been so difficult to interpret these verses. A Dew concept therefore existed in the Qur'an that was not to be explained until centuries later.

1. The Moon's Orbit.

Today, the concept is widely spread that the Moon is a satellite of the Earth around which it revolves in periods of twenty-nine days. A correction must however be made to the absolutely circular form of its orbit, since modern astronomy ascribes a certain eccentricity to this, so that the distance between the Earth and the Moon (240,000 miles) is only the average distance.

We have seen above how the Qur'an underlined the usefulness of observing the Moon's movements in calculating time (sura 10, verse 5, quoted at the beginning of this chapter.) This system has often been criticized for being archaic, impractical and unscientific in comparison to our system based on the Earth's rotation around the Sun, expressed today in the Julian calendar.

This criticism calls for the following two remarks:

a) Nearly fourteen centuries ago, the Qur'an was directed at the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula who were used to the lunar calculation of time. It was advisable to address them in the only language they could understand and not to upset the habits they had of locating spatial and temporal reference-marks which were nevertheless quite efficient. It is known how well-versed men living in the desert are in the observation of the sky. They navigated according to the stars and told the time according to the phases of the Moon. Those were the simplest and most reliable means available to them.

b) Apart from the specialists in this field, most people are unaware of the perfect correlation between the Julian and the lunar calendar: 235 lunar months correspond exactly to 19 Julian years of 365 1/4 days. Then length of our year of 365 days is not perfect because it has to be rectified every four years (with a leap year) .

With the lunar calendar, the same phenomena occur every 19 years (Julian). This is the Metonic cycle, named after the Greek astronomer Meton, who discovered this exact correlation between solar and lunar time in the Fifth century B.C.

2. The Sun.

It is more difficult to conceive of the Sun's orbit because we are so used to seeing our solar system organized around it. To understand the verse from the Qur'an, the position of the Sun in our galaxy must be considered, and we must therefore call on modern scientific ideas.

Our galaxy includes a very large number of stars spaced so as to form a disc that is denser at the centre than at the rim. The Sun occupies a position in it which is far removed from the centre of the disc. The galaxy revolves on its own axis which is its centre with the result that the Sun revolves around the same centre in a circular orbit. Modern astronomy has worked out the details of this. In 1917, Shapley estimated the distance between the Sun and the centre of our galaxy at 10 kiloparsecs i.e., in miles, circa the figure 2 followed by 17 zeros. To complete one revolution on its own axis, the galaxy and Sun take roughly 250 million years. The Sun travels at roughly 150 miles per second in the completion of this.

The above is the orbital movement of the Sun that was already referred to by the Qur'an fourteen centuries ago. The demonstration of the existence and details of this is one of the achievements of modern astronomy.

Reference to the Movement of the Moon and the Sun in Space With Their Own Motion.

This concept does not appear in those translations of the Qur'an that have been made by men of letters. Since the latter know nothing about astronomy, they have translated the Arabic word that expresses this movement by one of the meanings the word has: 'to swim'. They have done this in both the French translations and the, otherwise remarkable, English translation by Yusuf Ali.[66]

The Arabic word referring to a movement with a self-propelled motion is the verb *sabaha* (*yasbahuna* in the text of the two verses). All the senses of the verb imply a movement that is associated with a motion that comes from the body in question. If the movement takes place in water, it is 'to swim'; it is 'to move by the action of one's own legs' if it takes place on land. For a movement that occurs in space, it is difficult to see how else this meaning implied in the word could be rendered other than by employing its original sense. Thus there seems to have been no mistranslation, for the following reasons.

-The Moon completes its rotating motion on its own axis at the same time as it revolves around

the Earth, i.e. 291/2 days (approx.), so that it always has the same side facing us.

-The Sun takes roughly 25 days to revolve on its own axis. There are certain differences in its rotation at its equator and poles, (we shall not go into them here) but as a whole, the Sun is animated by a rotating motion.

It appears therefore that a verbal nuance in the Qur'an refers to the Sun and Moon's own motion. These motions of the two celestial bodies are confirmed by the data of modern science, and it is inconceivable that a man living in the Seventh century A.D.-however knowledgeable he might have been in his day (and this was certainly not true in Muhammad's case) -could have imagined them.

This view is sometimes contested by examples from great thinkers of antiquity who indisputably predicted certain data that modern science has verified. They could hardly have relied on scientific deduction however; their method of procedure was more one of philosophical reasoning. Thus the case of the pythagoreans is often advanced. In the Sixth century B.C., they defended the theory of the rotation of the Earth on its own axis and the movement of the planets around the Sun. This theory was to be confirmed by modern science. By comparing it with the case of the Pythagoreans, it is easy to put forward the hypothesis of Muhammad as being a brilliant thinker, who was supposed to have imagined all on his own what modern science was to discover centuries later. In so doing however, people quite simply forget to mention the other aspect of what these geniuses of philosophical reasoning produced, i.e. the colossal blunders that litter their work. It must be remembered for example, that the Pythagoreans also defended the theory whereby the Sun was fixed in space; they made it the centre of the world and only conceived of a celestial order that was centered on it. It is quite common in the works of the great philosophers of antiquity to find a mixture of valid and invalid ideas about the Universe. The brilliance of these human works comes from the advanced ideas they contain, but they should not make us overlook the mistaken concepts which have also been left to us. From a strictly scientific point of view, this is what distinguished them from the Qur'an. In the latter, many subjects are referred to that have a bearing on modern knowledge without one of them containing a statement that contradicts what has been established by present-day science.

The Sequence of Day and Night.

At a time when it was held that the Earth was the centre of the world and that the Sun moved in relation to it, how could any one have failed to refer to the Sun's movement when talking of the sequence of night and day? This is not however referred to in the Qur'an and the subject is dealt with as follows:

--sura 7, verse 54:

"(God) covers the day with the night which is in haste to follow it . . ."

--sura 36, verse 37:

"And a sign for them (human beings) is the night. We strip it of the day and they are in darkness."

--sura 31, verse 29:

"Hast thou not seen how God merges the night into the day and merges the day into the night."

--sura 39, verse 5:

". . . He coils the night upon the day and He coils the day upon the night."

The first verse cited requires no comment. The second simply provides an image.

It is mainly the third and fourth verses quoted above that provide interesting material on the process of interpenetration and especially of winding the night upon the day and the day upon the night. (sura 39, verse 5)

'To coil' or 'to wind' seems, as in the French translation by R. Blachère, to be the best way of translating the Arabic verb *kawwara*. The original meaning of the verb is to 'coil' a turban around the head; the notion of coiling is preserved in all the other senses of the word.

What actually happens however in space? American astronauts have seen and photographed what happens from their spaceships, especially at a great distance from Earth, e.g. from the Moon. They saw how the Sun permanently lights up (except in the case of an eclipse) the half of the Earth's surface that is facing it, while the other half of the globe is in darkness. The Earth turns on its own axis and the lighting remains the same, so that an area in the form of a half-sphere makes one revolution around the Earth in twenty-four hours while the other half-sphere, that has remained in darkness, makes the same revolution in the same time. This perpetual rotation of night and day is quite clearly described in the Qur'an. It is easy for the human understanding to grasp this notion nowadays because we have the idea of the Sun's (relative) immobility and the Earth's rotation. This process of perpetual coiling, including the interpenetration of one sector by another is expressed in the Qur'an just as if the concept of the Earth's roundness had already been conceived at the time-which was obviously not the case.

Further to the above reflections on the sequence of day and night, one must also mention, with a quotation of some verses from the Qur'an, the idea that there is more than one Orient and one Occident. This is of purely descriptive interest because these phenomena rely on the most commonplace observations. The idea is mentioned here with the aim of reproducing as faithfully as possible all that the Qur'an has to say on this subject.

The following are examples:

--In sura 70 verse 40, the expression 'Lord of Orient and Occidents'.

--In sura 55, verse 17, the expression 'Lord of the two Orient and the two Occidents'.

--In sura 43, verse 38, a reference to the 'distance between the two Orient', an image intended to express the immense size of the distance separating the two points.

Anyone who carefully watches the sunrise and sunset knows that the Sun rises at different point of the Orient and sets at different points of the Occident, according to season. Bearings taken on each of the horizons define the extreme limits that mark the two Orient and Occidents, and between these there are points marked off throughout the year. The phenomenon described here

is rather commonplace, but what mainly deserves attention in this chapter are the other topics dealt with, where the description of astronomical phenomena referred to in the Qur'an is in keeping with modern data.

D. EVOLUTION OF THE HEAVENS.

Having called modern concepts on the formation of the Universe to mind, reference was made to the evolution that took place, starting with primary nebula through to the formation of galaxies, stars and (for the solar system) the appearance of planets beginning with the Sun at a certain stage of its evolution. Modern data lead us to believe that in the solar system, and more generally in the Universe itself, this evolution is still continuing.

How can anybody who is aware of these ideas fail to make a comparison with certain statements found in the Qur'an in which the manifestations of divine Omnipotence are referred to.

The Qur'an reminds us several times that: "(God) subjected the sun and the moon: each one runs its course to an appointed term."

This sentence is to be found in sura 13, verse 2. sura 31, verse 29; sura 35, verse 13 and sura 39, verse 5.

In addition to this, the idea of a settled place is associated with the concept of a destination place in sura 36, verse 38: "The Sun runs its course to a settled place. This is the decree of the All Mighty, the Full of Knowledge."

'Settled place' is the translation of the word *mustaqarr* and there can be no doubt that the idea of an exact place is attached to it.

How do these statements fare when compared with data established by modern science?

The Qur'an gives an end to the Sun for its evolution and a destination place. It also provides the Moon with a settled place. To understand the possible meanings of these statements, we must remember what modern knowledge has to say about the evolution of the stars in general and the Sun in particular, and (by extension) the celestial bodies that automatically followed its movement through space, among them the Moon.

The Sun is a star that is roughly 4½ billion years old, according to experts in astrophysics. It is possible to distinguish a stage in its evolution, as one can for all the stars. At present, the Sun is at an early stage, characterized by the transformation of hydrogen atoms into helium atoms. Theoretically, this present stage should last another 5½ billion years according to calculations that allow a total of 10 billion years for the duration of the primary stage in a star of this kind. It has already been shown, in the case of these other stars, that this stage gives way to a second period characterized by the completion of the transformation of hydrogen into helium, with the resulting expansion of its external layers and the cooling of the Sun. In the final stage, its light is

greatly diminished and density considerably increased; this is to be observed in the type of star known as a 'white dwarf'.

The above dates are only of interest in as far as they give a rough estimate of the time factor involved, what is worth remembering and is really the main point of the above, is the notion of an evolution. Modern data allow us to predict that, in a few billion years, the conditions prevailing in the solar system will not be the same as they are today. Like other stars whose transformations have been recorded until they reached their final stage, it is possible to predict an end to the Sun.

The second verse quoted above (sur'a 36, verse 38) referred to the Sun running its course towards a place of its own.

Modern astronomy has been able to locate it exactly and has even given it a name, the Solar. Apex: the solar. system is indeed evolving in space towards a point situated in the Constellation of Hercules (*alpha lyrae*) whose exact location is firmly established; it is moving at a speed already ascertained at something in the region of 12 miles per. second.

All these astronomical data deserve to be mentioned in relation to the two verses from the Qur'an, since it is possible to state that they appear to agree perfectly with modern scientific data.

The Expansion of the Universe.

The expansion of the Universe is the most imposing discovery of modern science. Today it is a firmly established concept and the only debate centres around the way this is taking place.

It was first suggested by the general theory of relativity and is backed up by physics in the examination of the galactic spectrum; the regular movement towards the red section of their spectrum may be explained by the distancing of one galaxy from another. Thus the size of the Universe is probably constantly increasing and this increase will become bigger the further away the galaxies are from us. The speeds at which these celestial bodies are moving may, in the course of this perpetual expansion, go from fractions of the speed of light to speeds faster than this.

The following verse of the Qur' an (sura 51, verse 47) where God is speaking, may perhaps be compared with modern ideas:

"The heaven, We have built it with power. Verily. We are expanding it."

'Heaven' is the translation of the word *sama'* and this is exactly the extra-terrestrial world that is meant.

'We are expanding it' is the translation of the plural present participle *musi'una* of the verb *ausa'a* meaning 'to make wider, more spacious, to extend, to expand'.

Some translators who were unable to grasp the meaning of the latter provide translations that appear to me to be mistaken, e.g. "we give generously" (R. Blachère). Others sense the meaning, but are afraid to commit themselves: Hamidullah in his translation of the Qur'an talks of the widening of the heavens and space, but he includes a question mark. Finally, there are those who arm themselves with authorized scientific opinion in their commentaries and give the meaning stated here. This is true in the case of the *Muntakab*, a book of commentaries edited by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo. It refers to the expansion of the Universe in totally unambiguous terms.

E. THE CONQUEST OF SPACE.

From this point of view, three verses of the Qur'an should command our full attention. One expresses, without any trace of ambiguity, what man should and will achieve in this field. In the other two, God refers for the sake of the unbelievers in Makka to the surprise they would have if they were able to raise themselves up to the Heavens; He alludes to a hypothesis which will not be realized for the latter.

1) The first of these verses is sura 55, verse 33: "O assembly of Jinns and Men, if you can penetrate regions of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate them! You will not penetrate them save with a Power."[67]

The translation given here needs some explanatory comment:

a) The word 'if' expresses in English a condition that is dependant upon a possibility and either an achievable or an unachievable hypothesis. Arabic is a language which is able to introduce a nuance into the condition which is much more explicit. There is one word to express the possibility (*ida*), another for the achievable hypothesis (*in*) and a third for the unachievable hypothesis expressed by the word (*lau*). The verse in question has it as an achievable hypothesis expressed by the word (*in*). The Qur'an therefore suggests the material possibility of a concrete realization. This subtle linguistic distinction formally rules out the purely mystic interpretation that some people have (quite wrongly) put on this verse.

b) God is addressing the spirits (*jinn*) and human beings (*ins*), and not essentially allegorical figures.

c) 'To penetrate' is the translation of the verb *nafada* followed by the preposition *min*. According to Kazimirski's dictionary, the phrase means 'to pass right through and come out on the other side of a body' (e.g. an arrow that comes out on the other side). It therefore suggests a deep penetration and emergence at the other end into the regions in question.

d) The Power (*sultan*) these men will have to achieve this enterprise would seem to come from the All-Mighty.

There can be no doubt that this verse indicates the possibility men will one day achieve what we today call (perhaps rather improperly) 'the conquest of space'. One must note that the text of the

Qur'an predicts not only penetration through the regions of the Heavens, but also the Earth, i.e. the exploration of its depths.

2) The other two verses are taken from sura 15, (verses 14 and 15). God is speaking of the unbelievers in Makka, as the context of this passage in the sura shows:

"Even if We opened unto them a gate to Heaven and they were to continue ascending therein, they would say. our sight is confused as in drunkenness. Nay, we are people bewitched."

The above expresses astonishment at a remarkable spectacle, different from anything man could imagine.

The conditional sentence is introduced here by the word *lau* which expresses a hypothesis that could never be realized as far as it concerned the people mentioned in these verses.

When talking of the conquest of space therefore, we have two passages in the text of the Qur'an: one of them refers to what will one day become a reality thanks to the powers of intelligence and ingenuity God will give to man, and the other describes an event that the unbelievers in Makka will never witness, hence its character of a condition never to be realized. The event will however be seen by others, as intimated in the first verse quoted above. It describes the human reactions to the unexpected spectacle that travellers in space will see. their confused sight, as in drunkenness, the feeling of being bewitched . . .

This is exactly how astronauts have experienced this remarkable adventure since the first human spaceflight around the world in 1961. It is known in actual fact how once one is above the Earth's atmosphere, the Heavens no longer have the azure appearance we see from Earth, which results from phenomena of absorption of the Sun's light into the layers of the atmosphere. The human observer in space above the Earth's atmosphere sees a black sky and the Earth seems to be surrounded by a halo of bluish colour due to the same phenomena of absorption of light by the Earth's atmosphere. The Moon has no atmosphere, however, and therefore appears in its true colors against the black background of the sky. It is a completely new spectacle therefore that presents itself to men in space, and the photographs of this spectacle are well known to present-day man.

Here again, it is difficult not to be impressed, when comparing the text of the Qur'an to the data of modern science, by statements that simply cannot be ascribed to the thought of a man who lived more than fourteen centuries ago.

The Earth

As in the case of the subjects already examined, the verses of the Qur'an dealing with the Earth are dispersed throughout the Book. It is difficult to classify them, and the scheme adopted here is a personal one.

To explain them more clearly, one might begin by singling out a certain number of verses that deal with more than one subject at a time. These verses are largely general in their application and constitute an invitation extended to men to reflect on divine Beneficence by pondering on the examples provided.

Other groups of verses may be singled out which deal with more specific subjects, as follows:

- the water cycle and the seas.
- the Earth's relief.
- the Earth's atmosphere.

A. VERSES CONTAINING GENERAL STATEMENTS

Although these verses provide arguments intended to lead man to meditate on the Beneficence of God towards His creatures, here and there they contain statements that are interesting from the point of view of modern science. They are perhaps especially revealing by virtue of the fact that they do not express the varied beliefs concerning natural phenomena that were current at the time of the Qur'anic Revelation. These beliefs were later to be shown by scientific knowledge to be mistaken.

On the one hand, these verses express simple ideas readily understood by to those people to whom, for geographical reasons, the Qur'an was first directed: the inhabitants of Makka and Madina, the Bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula. On the other hand, they contain reflections of a general nature from which a more cultivated public of any time and place may learn something instructive, once it starts to think about them: this is a mark of the Qur'an's universality.

As there is apparently no classification of such verses in the Qur'an, they are presented here in the numerical order of the suras:

--sura 2, verse 22:

"(God) is the One who made the earth a couch for you and the heavens an edifice, and sent down water from the sky. He brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance. Do not join equals with God when you know."

--sura 2, verse 164:

"Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth,
In the disparity of night and day,
In the ship which runs upon the sea for the profit of mankind,
In the water which God sent down from the sky thereby reviving the earth after its death,
In the beasts of all kinds He scatters therein,
In the change of the winds and the subjected clouds between the sky and earth,
Here are Signs for people who are wise."

--sura 13, verse 3:

"(God) is the One who spread out the earth and set therein mountains standing firm and rivers.

For every fruit He placed two of a pair. He covers the day with the night. Verily in this there are Signs for people who reflect."

--sura 15, verses 19 to 21. God is speaking:

"The earth, We spread it out and set thereon mountains standing firm. We caused all kind of things to grow therein in due balance. Therein We have provided you and those you do not supply with means of subsistence and there is not a thing but its stores are with Us. We do not send it down save in appointed measure."

--sura 20, verses 53 and 54:

"(God is) the One Who has made for you the earth like a cradle and inserted roads into it for you. He sent water down from the sky and thereby We brought forth pairs of plants, each separate from the other. Eat! Pasture your cattle ! Verily in this are Signs for people endued with intelligence."

--sura 27, verse 61:

"He Who made the earth an abode and set rivers in its interstices and mountains standing firm. He placed a barrier between the two seas. Is there any divinity besides God? Nay, but most people do not know."

Here a reference is made to the general stability of the Earth's crust. It is known that at the early stages of the Earth's existence before its crust cooled down, the latter was unstable. The stability of the Earth's crust is not however strictly uniform, since there are zones where earthquakes intermittently occur. As to the barrier between the two seas, it is an image which signifies that the waters of the great rivers and the waters of the sea do not mix at the level of certain large estuaries.

--sura 67, verse 15:

"(God is) the One Who made the earth docile to you. So walk upon its shoulders! Eat of His sustenance! Unto Him will be the Resurrection."

--sura 79, verses 30-33:

"After that (God) spread the earth out. Therefrom He drew out its water and its pasture. And the mountains He has firmly fixed. Goods for you and for your cattle."

In many such verses, emphasis is laid upon the importance of water and the practical consequences of its presence in the earth's soil, i.e. the fertility of the soil. There can be no doubt that in desert countries, water is the most important element governing man's survival. The reference in the Qur'an however goes beyond this geographical detail. According to scientific knowledge the character the Earth has of a planet that is rich in water is unique to the solar system, and this is exactly what is highlighted in the Qur'an. Without water, the Earth would be a dead planet like the Moon. The Qur'an gives first place to water among the natural phenomena of the Earth that it refers to. The water cycle is described with remarkable accuracy in the Qur'an.

B. THE WATER CYCLE AND THE SEAS.

When the verses of the Qur'an concerning the role of water in man's existence are read in succession today, they all appear to us to express ideas that are quite obvious. The reason for this is simple: in our day and age, we all, to a lesser or greater extent, know about the water cycle in nature.

If however, we consider the various concepts the ancients had on this subject, it becomes clear that the data in the Qur'an do not embody the mythical concepts current at the time of the Revelation which had been developed more according to philosophical speculation than observed phenomena. Although it was empirically possible to acquire on a modest scale, the useful practical knowledge necessary for the improvement of the irrigation, the concepts held on the water cycle in general would hardly be acceptable today.

Thus it would have been easy to imagine that underground water could have come from the infiltration of precipitations in the soil. In ancient times however, this idea, held by Vitruvius Polio Marcus in Rome, 1st century B.C., was cited as an exception. For many centuries therefore (and the Qur'anic Revelation is situated during this period) man held totally inaccurate views on the water cycle.

Two specialists on this subject, G. Gastany and B. Blavoux, in their entry in the *Universalis Encyclopedia (Encyclopedia Universalis)* under the heading *Hydrogeology* (Hydrogéologie), give an edifying history of this problem.

"In the Seventh century B.C., Thales of Miletus held the theory whereby the waters of the oceans, under the effect of winds, were thrust towards the interior of the continents; so the water fell upon the earth and penetrated into the soil. Plato shared these views and thought that the return of the waters to the oceans was via a great abyss, the 'Tartarus'. This theory had many supporters until the Eighteenth century, one of whom was Descartes. Aristotle imagined that the water vapour from the soil condensed in cool mountain caverns and formed underground lakes that fed springs. He was followed by Seneca (1st Century A.D.) and many others, until 1877, among them O. Volger . . . The first clear formulation of the water cycle must be attributed to Bernard Palissy in 1580. he claimed that underground water came from rainwater infiltrating into the soil. This theory was confirmed by E. Mariotte and P. Perrault in the Seventeenth century.

In the following passages from the Qur'an, there is no trace of the mistaken ideas that were current at the time of Muhammad:

--sura 50, verses 9 to 11:

"We[68] sent down from the sky blessed water whereby We caused to grow gardens, grains for harvest, tall palm-trees with their spathes, piled one above the other-sustenance for (Our) servants. Therewith We gave (new) life to a dead land. So will be the emergence (from the tombs)."

--sura 23, verses 18 and 19:

"We sent down water from the sky in measure and lodged it in the ground. And We certainly are

able to withdraw it. Therewith for you We gave rise to gardens of palm-trees and vineyards where for you are abundant fruits and of them you eat."

--sura 15, verse 22:

"We sent forth the winds that fecundate. We cause the water to descend from the sky. We provide you with the water-you (could) not be the guardians of its reserves."

There are two possible interpretations of this last verse. The fecundating winds may be taken to be the fertilizers of plants because they carry pollen. This may, however, be a figurative expression referring by analogy to the role the wind plays in the process whereby a non-raincarrying cloud is turned into one that produces a shower of rain. This role is often referred to, as in the following verses:

--sura 35, verse 9:

"God is the One Who sends forth the winds which raised up the clouds. We drive them to a dead land. Therewith We revive the ground after its death. So will be the Resurrection."

It should be noted how the style is descriptive in the first part of the verse, then passes without transition to a declaration from God. Such sudden changes in the form of the narration are very frequent in the Qur'an.

--sura 30, verse 48:

"God is the One Who sends forth the winds which raised up the clouds. He spreads them in the sky as He wills and breaks them into fragments. Then thou seest raindrops issuing from within them. He makes them reach such of His servants as He wills. And they are rejoicing."

--sura 7, verse 57:

"(God) is the One Who sends forth the winds like heralds of His Mercy. When they have carried the heavy-laden clouds, We drive them to a dead land. Then We cause water to descend and thereby bring forth fruits of every kind. Thus We will bring forth the dead. Maybe you will remember."

--sura 25, verses 48 and 49:

"(God) is the One Who sends forth the winds like heralds of His Mercy. We cause pure water to descend in order to revive a dead land with it and to supply with drink the multitude of cattle and human beings We have created."

--sura 45, verse 5:

". . . In the provision that God sends down from the sky and thereby He revives the ground after its death and in the change (of direction) of winds, there are Signs for people who are wise."

The provision made in this last verse is in the form of the water sent down from the sky, as the context shows. The accent is on the change of the winds that modify the rain cycle.

--sura 13, verse 17:

"(God) sends water down from the sky so that the rivers flow according to their measure. The torrent bears away an increasing foam."

-sura 67, verse 30, God commands the Prophet:

"Say. Do you see if your water were to be lost in the ground, who then can supply you with gushing water?"

-sura 39, verse 21:

"Hast thou not seen that God sent water down from the sky and led it through sources into the ground? Then He caused sown fields of different colors to grow."

--sura 36, verse 34:

"Therein We placed gardens of palm-trees and vineyards and We caused water springs to gush forth."

The importance of springs and the way they are fed by rainwater conducted into them is stressed in the last three verses. It is worth pausing to examine this fact and call to mind the predominance in the Middle Ages of views such as those held by Aristotle, according to whom springs were fed by underground lakes. In his entry on *Hydrology* (Hydrologie) in the *Universalis Encyclopedia* (*Encyclopedia Universalis*) M.R. Remenieras, a teacher at the French National School of Agronomy (Ecole nationale du Genie rural, des Eaux et Forêts), describes the main stages of hydrology and refers to the magnificent irrigation works of the ancients, particularly in the Middle East. He notes however that an empirical outlook ruled over everything, since the ideas of the time proceeded from mistaken concepts. He continues as follows:

"It was not until the Renaissance (between circa 1400 and 1600) that purely philosophical concepts gave way to research based on the objective observation of hydrologic phenomena. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) rebelled against Aristotle's statements. Bernard Palissy, in his *Wonderful discourse on the nature of waters and fountains both natural and artificial* (Discours admirable de la nature des eaux et fontaines tant naturelles qu'artificielles (Paris, 1570)) gives a correct interpretation of the water cycle and especially of the way springs are fed by rainwater."

This last statement is surely exactly what is mentioned in verse 21, sura 39 describing the way rainwater is conducted into sources in the ground.

The subject of verse 43, sura 24 is rain and hail:

"Hast thou not seen that God makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them a heap. And thou seest raindrops issuing from within it. He sends down from the sky mountains of hail, He strikes therewith whom He wills and He turns it away from whom He wills. The flashing of its lightning almost snatches away the sight." The following passage requires some comment:

--sura 56, verses 68-70:

"Have you observed the water you drink? Do you bring it down from the rainclouds? Or do We? If it were Our will, We could make it salty. Then why are you not thankful?"

This reference to the fact that God could have made fresh water salty is a way of expressing divine Omnipotence. Another means of reminding us of the same Omnipotence is the challenge to man to make rain fall from the clouds. In modern times however, technology has surely made it possible to create rain artificially. Can one therefore oppose the statement in the Qur'an to man's ability to produce precipitations?

The answer is no, because it seems clear that one must take account of man's limitations in this field. M.A. Facy, an expert at the French Meteorological Office, wrote the following in the *Universalis Encyclopedia (Encyclopedia Universalis)* under the heading *Precipitations* (Precipitations): "It will never be possible to make rain fall from a cloud that does not have the suitable characteristics of a raincloud or one that has not yet reached the appropriate stage of evolution (maturity)". Man can never therefore hasten the precipitation process by technical means when the natural conditions for it are not present. If this were not the case, droughts would never occur in practice-which they obviously do. To have control over rain and fine weather still remains a dream therefore.

Man cannot willfully break the established cycle that maintains the circulation of water in nature. This cycle may be outlined as follows, according to modern ideas on hydrology.

The calories obtained from the Sun's rays cause the sea and those parts of the Earth's surface that are covered or soaked in water to evaporate. The water vapour that is given off rises into the atmosphere and, by condensation, forms into clouds. The winds then intervene and move the clouds thus formed over varying distances. The clouds can then either disperse without producing rain, or combine their mass with others to create even greater condensation, or they can fragment and produce rain at some stages in their evolution. When rain reaches the sea (70% of the Earth's surface is covered by seas), the cycle is soon repeated. When rain falls on the land, it may be absorbed by vegetation and thus aid the latter's growth; the vegetation in its turn gives off water and thus returns some water to the atmosphere. The rest, to a lesser or greater extent, infiltrates into the soil, whence it is either conducted through channels into the sea, or comes back to the Earth's surface. network through springs or resurgences.

When one compares the modern data of hydrology to what is contained in the numerous verses of the Qur'an quoted in this paragraph, one has to admit that there is a remarkable degree of agreement between them.

The Seas.

Whereas the above verses from the Qur'an have provided material for comparison between modern knowledge about the water cycle in nature, this is not the case for the seas. There is not a single statement in the Qur'an dealing with the seas which could be used for comparison with scientific data *per se*. This does not diminish the necessity of pointing out however that none of

the statements in the Qur'an on the seas refers to the beliefs, myths or superstitions prevalent at the time of its Revelation.

A certain number of verses deal with the seas and navigation. As subjects for reflection, they provide indications of divine Omnipotence that arise from the facts of common observation. The following verses are examples of this:

--sura 14, verse 32:

"(God) has made the ship subject to you, so that it runs upon the sea at His Command."

--sura 16, verse 14:

"(God) is the One Who subjected the sea, so that you eat fresh meat from it and you extract from it ornaments which you wear. Thou seest the ships plowing the waves, so that you seek of His Bounty. Maybe, you will be thankful."

--sura 31, verse 31:

"Hast thou seen that the ship runs upon the sea by the Grace of God, in order to show you His signs. Verily in this are Signs for all who are persevering and grateful."

--sura 55, verse 24:

"His are the ships erected upon the sea like tokens."

--sura 36, verse 41-44:

"A sign for them is that We bore their offspring in the loaded Ark. We have created for them similar (vessels) on which they ride. If We will, We drown them and there is no help and they will not be saved unless by Mercy from Us and as a gratification for a time."

The reference here is quite clearly to the vessel bearing man upon the sea, just as, long ago, Noah and the other occupants of the vessel were carried in the Ark that enabled them to reach dry land.

Another observed fact concerning the sea stands out, because of its unusual nature, from the verses of the Qur'an devoted to it: three verses refer to certain characteristics shared by great rivers when they flow out into the ocean.

The phenomenon is well known and often seen whereby the immediate mixing of salty seawater and fresh riverwater does not occur. The Qur'an refers to this in the case of what is thought to be the estuary of the Tigris and Euphrates where they unite to form what one might call a 'sea' over 100 miles long, the Shatt Al Arab. At the inner parts of the gulf, the effect of the tides is to produce the welcome phenomenon of the reflux of fresh water to the interior of the dry land, thus ensuring adequate irrigation. To understand the text correctly, one has to know that the English word 'sea' conveys the general meaning of the Arabic word *bahr* which designates a large mass of water and is equally used for both the sea and the great rivers: the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates for example.

The following are the three verses that describe this phenomenon:

--sura 25, verse 53:

"(God) is the One Who has let free the two seas, one is agreeable and sweet, the other salty and bitter. He placed a barrier between them, a partition that it is forbidden to pass."

--sura 35, verse 12:

"The two seas are not alike. The water of one is agreeable, sweet, pleasant to drink. The other salty and bitter. You eat fresh meat from it and you extract from it ornaments which you wear."

--sura 55, verses 19, 20 and 22:

"He has loosed the two seas. They meet together. Between them there is a barrier which they do not transgress. Out of them come pearls and coral."

In addition to the description of the main fact, these verses refer to what may be obtained from fresh water and seawater: fish, personal adornment, i.e. coral and pearls. With regard to the phenomenon whereby the river water does not mix with seawater at the estuary, one must understand that this is not peculiar to the Tigris and Euphrates; they are not mentioned by name in the text, but it is thought to refer to them. Rivers with a very large outflow, such as the Mississippi and the Yangtze, have the same peculiarity. the mixing of their fresh water with the salty water of the sea does not often occur until very far out at sea.

C. THE EARTH'S RELIEF.

The constitution of the Earth is highly complex. Today, it is possible to imagine it very roughly as being formed of a deep layer, at very high temperature, and especially of a central area where rocks are still in fusion, and of a surface layer, the Earth's crust which is solid and cold. The crust is very thin; its thickness is estimated in units of miles or units of ten miles at the most. The Earth's radius is however slightly over 3,750 miles, so that its crust does not represent (on average) one hundredth of the of the sphere's radius. It is upon this skin, as it were, that all geological phenomena have taken place. At the origin of these phenomena are folds that were to form the mountain ranges; their formation is called 'orogenesis' in geology. the process is of considerable importance because with the development of a relief that was to constitute a mountain, the Earth's crust was driven in proportionately far down: this process ensures a foundation in the layer that underlies it.

The history of the distribution of the sea and land on the surface of the globe has only recently been established and is still very incomplete, even for the most recent and best known periods. It is likely that the oceans appeared and formed the hydrosphere circa half a billion years ago. The continents were probably a single mass at the end of the primary era, then subsequently broke apart. Some continents or parts of continents have moreover emerged through the formation of mountains in maritime zones (e.g. the North Atlantic continent and part of Europe).

According to modern ideas, the dominating factor in the formation of the land that emerged was the development of mountain ranges. The evolution of the land, from the primary to the quaternary era, is classed according to 'orogenic phases' that are themselves grouped into 'cycles' of the same name since the formation of all mountains reliefs had repercussions on the balance

between the sea and the continents. It made some parts of the land disappear and others emerge, and for hundreds of millions of years it has altered the surface distribution of the continents and oceans: the former at present only occupying three tenths of the surface of this planet.

In this way it is possible to give a very rough outline of the transformations that have taken place over the last hundreds of millions of years.

When referring to the Earth's relief, the Qur'an only describes, as it were, the formation of the mountains. Seen from the present point of view, there is indeed little one can say about the verses that only express God's Beneficence to man with regard to the Earth's formation, as in the following verses:

--sura 71, verses 19 and 20:

"For you God made the earth a carpet so that you travel along its roads and the paths of valleys."

--sura 51, verse 48:

"The earth, We have spread it out. How excellently We did that."

The carpet which has been spread out is the Earth's crust, a solidified shell on which we can live, since the globe's sub-strata are very hot, fluid and hostile to any form of life.

The statements in the Qur'an referring to the mountains and the references to their stability subsequent to the phenomenon of the folds are very important.

--sura 88, verses 19 & 20. The context invites unbelievers to consider certain natural phenomena, among them:

". . . the mountains, how they have been pitched (like a tent).
The Earth how it was made even."

The following verses give details about the way in which the mountains were anchored in the ground:

--sura 78, verses 6 & 7:

"Have We not made the earth an expanse and the mountains stakes."

The stakes referred to are the ones used to anchor a tent in the ground (*autad*, plural of *watad*).

Modern geologists describe the folds in the Earth as giving foundations to the mountains, and their dimensions go roughly one mile to roughly 10 miles. The stability of the Earth's crust results from the phenomenon of these folds.

So it is not surprising to find reflections on the mountains in certain passages of the Qur'an, such as the following:

--sura 79, verse 32:

"And the mountains (God) has fixed them firmly."

--sura 31, verse 10:

"(God) has cast into the ground (mountains) standing firm, so that it does not shake with you."

The same phrase is repeated in sura 16, verse 15; and the same idea is expressed with hardly any change in sura 21, verse 31:

"We have placed in the ground (mountains) standing firm so that it does not shake with them."

These verses express the idea that the way the mountains are laid out ensures stability and is in complete agreement with geological data.

D. THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE.

In addition to certain statements specifically relating to the sky, examined in the preceding chapter, the Qur'an contains several passages dealing with the phenomena that occur in the atmosphere. As for the comparison between them and the data of modern science, it is to be noted here, as elsewhere, that there is absolutely no contradiction between today's modern scientific knowledge and the phenomena described.

Altitude.

A familiar feeling of discomfort experienced at high altitude, which increases the higher one climbs, is expressed in verse 125, sura 6:

"Those whom God wills to guide, He opens their breast to Islam. Those whom He wills lose their way, He makes their breast narrow and constricted, as if they were climbing in the sky."

Some commentators have claimed that the notion of discomfort at high altitude was unknown to the Arabs of Muhammad's time. It appears that this was not true at all: the existence on the Arabian Peninsula of peaks rising over two miles high makes it extremely implausible that they should not have known of the difficulty of breathing at high altitude.[69] Others have seen in this verse a prediction of the conquest of space, an opinion that appears to require categorical denial, at least for this passage.

Electricity in the Atmosphere.

Electricity in the atmosphere and the consequences of this, i.e.

lightning and hail, are referred to in the following verses:

--sura 13, verses 12-13:

"(God) is the One Who shows you the lightning, with fear and covetousness. He raised up the

heavy clouds. The thunder glorifies His Praise and so do the angels for awe. He sends the thunder-bolt and strikes with them who He wills while they are disputing about God. He is All Mighty in His Power."

--sura 24, verse 43 (already quoted in this chapter):

"Hast thou not seen that God makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them a heap. And thou seest raindrops issuing from within it. He sends down from the sky mountains of hail, He strikes therewith whom He wills and He turns it away from whom He wills. The flashing of its lightning almost snatches away the sight."

In these two verses there is the expression of an obvious correlation between the formation of heavy rainclouds or clouds containing hail and the occurrence of lightning. the former, the subject of covetousness on account of the benefit it represents and the latter, the subject of fear, because when it falls, it is at the will of the All-Mighty. The connection between the two phenomena is verified by present-day knowledge of electricity in the atmosphere.

Shadows.

The phenomenon of shadows and the fact that they move is very simply explained today. It forms the subject of the following observations:

-sura 16, verse 81:

"Out of the things He created, God has given you shade . . ."

--sura 16, verse 48:

"Have (the Unbelievers) not observed that for all the things God created, how their shadow shifts right and left, prostrating themselves to God while they are full of humility."

--sura 25, verses 45 and 46:

"Hast thou not seen how thy Lord has spread the shade. If He willed, He could have made it stationary. Moreover We made the sun its guide and We withdraw it towards Us easily."

Apart from the phrases dealing with the humility before God of all the things He created, including their shadow, and the fact that God can take back all manifestations of His Power, as He wills, the text of the Qur'an refers to the relationship between the Sun and the shadows. One must bear in mind at this point the fact that, in Muhammad's day, it was believed that the way a shadow moved was governed by the movement of the sun from east to west. This principle was applied in the case of the sundial to measure the time between sunrise and sunset. In this instance, the Qur'an speaks of the phenomenon without referring to the explanation current at the time of the Revelation. It would have been readily accepted for many centuries by those who came after Muhammad. In the end however, it would have been shown to be inaccurate. The Qur'an only talks moreover of the function the sun has as an indicator of shadow. Evidently there is no contradiction between the way the Qur'an describes shadow and what we know of this phenomenon in modern times.

The Animal and Vegetable Kingdoms

Numerous verses describing the origins of life have been assembled in this chapter, along with certain aspects of the vegetable kingdom and general or specific topics relating to the animal kingdom. The grouping of verses scattered throughout the Book affords a general view of the data the Qur'an contains on these subjects.

In the case of the subject of this and the following chapter, the examination of the Qur'anic text has sometimes been particularly delicate on account of certain difficulties inherent in the vocabulary. These have only been overcome through the fact that scientific data which have a bearing on the subject have been taken into consideration. It is particularly so in the case of living beings, i.e. animal, vegetable and human, where a confrontation with the teachings of science is shown to be indispensable in the search for the meaning of certain statements on these topics contained in the Qur'an.

It will become clear that numerous translations of these passages in the Qur'an, made by men of letters, must be deemed inaccurate by the scientist. The same holds true for commentaries made by those who do not possess the scientific knowledge necessary for an understanding of the text.

A. THE ORIGINS OF LIFE.

This question has always preoccupied man, both for himself and for the living things around him. It will be examined here from a general point of view. The case of man, whose appearance on Earth and reproduction processes are the subject of lengthy exposés, will be dealt with in the next chapter.

When the Qur'an describes the origins of life on a very broad basis, it is extremely concise. It does so in a verse that also mentions the process of the formation of the Universe, already quoted and commented on:

--sura 21, verse 30:

"Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then We clove them asunder and We got every living thing out of the water. Will they then not believe?"

The notion of 'getting something out of something' does not give rise to any doubts. The phrase can equally mean that every living thing was made of water (as its essential component) or that every living thing originated in water. The two possible meanings are strictly in accordance with scientific data. Life is in fact of aquatic origin and water is the major component of all living cells. Without water, life is not possible. When the possibility of life on another planet is discussed, the first question is always: does it contain a sufficient quantity of water to support life?

Modern data lead us to think that the oldest living being must have belonged to the vegetable kingdom: algae have been found that date from the pre-Cambrian period, i.e. the time of the oldest known lands. Organisms belonging to the animal kingdom probably appeared slightly later. they too came from the sea.

What has been translated here by 'water' is the word *ma'* which means both water in the sky and water in the sea, plus any kind of liquid. In the first meaning, water is the element necessary to all vegetable life:

--sura 20, verse 53.

"(God is the One Who) sent water down from the sky and thereby We brought forth pairs of plants each separate from the other."

This is the first reference to the notion of a pair in the vegetable kingdom. We shall return to this later.

In the second meaning, a liquid without any further indication of what kind, the word is used in its indeterminate form to designate what is at the basis of the formation of all animal life:

-sura 24, verse 45:

"God created every animal from water."

We shall see further on how this word may also be applied to seminal fluid[70].

Whether it deals therefore with the origins of life in general, or the element that gives birth to plants in the soil, or the seed of animals, all the statements contained in the Qur'an on the origin of life are strictly in accordance with modern scientific data. None of the myths on the origins of life that abounded at the time the Qur'an appeared are mentioned in the text.

B. THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM.

It is not possible to quote in their entirety all the numerous passages in the Qur'an in which divine Beneficence is referred to concerning the salutary effect of the rain which makes vegetation grow. Here are just three verses on this subject:

--sura 16, verses 10 and 11:

"(God) is the One Who sends water down from the sky. For you this is a drink and out of it

(grow) shrubs in which you let (cattle) graze freely. Therewith for you He makes sown fields, olives, palm-trees, vineyards and all kinds of fruit grow."

--sura 6, verse 99:

"(God) is the One Who sent water down from the sky. Therewith We brought forth plants of all kinds and from them the verdure and We brought forth from it the clustered grains, and from the palm-tree its spathes with bunches of dates (hanging) low, the gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranates similar and different. Look at their fruit, when they bear it, and their ripening. Verily, in that there are signs for people who believe."

--sura 50, verses 9-11:

"We sent down from the sky blessed water whereby We caused to grow gardens, grains for harvest, tall palm-trees with their spathes, piled one above the other-sustenance for (Our) servants. Therewith We give (new) life to a dead land. So will be the emergence (from the tombs)."

The Qur'an adds to these general data others that refer to more specialized subjects:

Balance in the Vegetable Kingdom

--sura 15, verse 19:

"The earth . . . We caused all kinds of things to grow therein in due balance."

The Different Qualities of Various Foods

--sura 13, verse 4:

"On the earth are adjacent parts; vineyards, sown fields, palm-trees, similar and not similar, watered with the same water. We make some of them more excellent than others to eat and verily in this are signs for wise people."

It is interesting to note the existence of these verses because they show the sober quality of the terms used, and the absence of any description that might highlight the beliefs of the times, rather than fundamental truths. What particularly attracts our attention however, are the statements in the Qur'an concerning reproduction in the vegetable kingdom.

Reproduction in the Vegetable Kingdom

One must bear in mind that there are two methods of reproduction in the vegetable kingdom: one sexual, the other asexual. It is only the first which in fact deserves the term 'reproduction', because this defines a biological process whose purpose is the appearance of a new individual identical to the one that gave it birth.

Asexual reproduction is quite simply multiplication. It is the result of the fragmentation of an organism which has separated from the main plant and developed in such a way as to resemble the plant from which it came. It is considered by Guilliermond and Mangenot to be a 'special case of growth'. A very simple example of this is the cutting. a cutting taken from a plant is placed in suitably watered soil and regenerated by the growth of new roots. Some plants have organs specially designed for this, while others give off spores that behave like seeds, as it were, (it should be remembered that seeds are the results of a process of sexual reproduction).

Sexual reproduction in the vegetable kingdom is carried out by the coupling of the male and female parts of the generic formations united on a same plant or located on separate plants.

This is the only form that is mentioned in the Qur'an.

-sura 20, verse 53:

"(God is the One Who) sent water down from the sky and thereby We brought forth pairs of plants each separate from the other."

'One of a pair' is the translation of *zawj* (plural *azwaj*) whose original meaning is: 'that which, in the company of another, forms a pair'; the word is used just as readily for a married couple as for a pair of shoes.

--sura 22, verse 5:

"Thou seest the grounds lifeless. When We send down water thereon it shakes and grows and puts forth every magnificent pair (of plants)."

--sura 31, verse 10:

"We caused to grow (on the earth) every noble pair (of plants)."

--sura 13, verse 3:

"Of all fruits (God) placed (on the earth) two of a pair."

We know that fruit is the end-product of the reproduction process of superior plants which have the most highly developed and complex organization. The stage preceding fruit is the flower, which has male and female organs (stamens and ovules). The latter, once pollen has been carried to them, bear fruit which in turn matures and frees its seeds. All fruit therefore implies the existence of male and female organs. This is the meaning of the verse in the Qur'an.

It must be noted that for certain species, fruit can come from non-fertilized flowers (parthenocarpic fruit), e.g. bananas, certain types of pineapple, fig, orange, and vine. They can nevertheless also come from plants that have definite sexual characteristics.

The culmination of the reproductive process comes with the germination of the seed once its outside casing is opened (sometimes it is compacted into a fruit-stone). This opening allows roots to emerge which draw from the soil all that is necessary for the plant's slowed-down life as a seed while it grows and produces a new plant.

A verse in the Qur'an refers to this process of germination:

--sura 6, verse 95:

"Verily, God splits the grain and the fruit-stone."

The Qur'an often restates the existence of these components of a pair in the vegetable kingdom and brings the notion of a couple into a more general context, without set limits:

--sura 36, Verse 36:

"Glory be to Him Who created the components of couples of every kind: of what the ground caused to grow, of themselves (human beings) and of what you do not know."

One could form many hypotheses concerning the meaning of the 'things men did not know' in Muhammad's day. Today we can distinguish structures or coupled functions for them, going from the infinitesimally small to the infinitely large, in the living as well as the non-living world. The point is to remember these clearly expressed ideas and note, once again, that they are in perfect agreement with modern science.

C. THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

There are several questions in the Qur'an concerning the animal kingdom which are the subject of comments that call for a confrontation with modern scientific knowledge. Here again, however, one would gain an incomplete view of all that the Qur'an contains on this subject if one were to leave out a passage such as the extract which follows. In this passage, the creation of certain elements in the animal kingdom is described with the purpose of making man reflect upon the divine Beneficence extended to him. It is quoted basically to provide an example of the way in which the Qur'an describes the harmonious adaptation of Creation to man's needs; it relates in particular the case of those people who live in a rural setting, since there is nothing that could be examined from a different point of view.

-sura 16, verses 5 to 8:

"(God) created cattle for you and (you find) in them warmth, useful services and food, sense of beauty when you bring them home and when you take them to pasture. They bear your heavy loads to lands you could not reach except with great personal effort. Verily, your Lord is Compassionate and Merciful; (He created) horses, mules and donkeys for you to ride and for ornament. And He created what you do not know."

Alongside these general remarks, the Qur'an sets out certain data on highly diversified subjects:

- reproduction in the animal kingdom.
- references to the existence of animal communities.
- statements concerning bees, spiders and birds.
- remarks on the source of constituents of animal milk.

1. Reproduction in the Animal Kingdom.

This is very summarily dealt with in verses 45 and 46, sura 53:

"(God) fashioned the two of a pair, the male and the female, from a small quantity of liquid when it is poured out."

The 'pair' is the same expression that we have already encountered in the verses which deal with reproduction in the vegetable kingdom. Here, the sexes are given. The detail which is absolutely remarkable is the precision with which it is stated that a small quantity of liquid is required for reproduction. The word itself signifying 'sperm' is used. The relevance of this remark will be commented upon in the next chapter.

2. References to the Existence of Animal Communities.

--sura 6, Verse 38:

"There is no animal on earth, no bird which flies on wings, that (does not belong to) communities like you. We have not neglected anything in the Book (of Decrees). Then to their Lord they will be gathered."

There are several points in this verse which require comment. Firstly, it would seem that there is a description of what happens to animals after their death: Islam does not apparently, have any doctrine on this point. Then there is predestination in general[71] which would seem to be mentioned here. It could be conceived as absolute predestination or relative, i.e. limited to structures and a functional organization that condition modes of behaviour: the animal acts upon various exterior impulses in terms of a particular conditioning.

Blachère states that an older commentator, such as Razi, thought that this verse only referred to instinctive actions whereby animals worship God. Sheik Si Boubakeur Hamza, in the commentary to his translation of the Koran, speaks of "the instinct which, according to Divine Wisdom, pushes all beings to group together, so that they demand that the work of each member serve the whole group."

Animal behaviour has been closely investigated in recent decades, with the result that genuine animal communities have been shown to exist. Of course, for a long time now the results of a group or community's work have been examined and this has led to the acceptance of a community organization. It has only been recently however, that the mechanisms which preside over this kind of organization have been discovered for certain species. The most studied and best known case is undoubtedly that of bees, to whose behaviour the name von Frisch is linked. Von Frisch, Lorenz and Tinbergen received the 1973 Nobel Prize for their work in this field.

3. Statements Concerning Bees, Spiders and Birds.

When specialists on the nervous system wish to provide striking examples of the prodigious organization directing animal behaviour, possibly the animals referred to most frequently are bees, spiders and birds (especially migratory birds). Whatever the case, there is no doubt that these three groups constitute a model of highly evolved organization.

The fact that the text of the Qur'an refers to this exemplary trio in the animal kingdom is in absolute keeping with the exceptionally interesting character that each of these animals has from a scientific point of view.

Bees

In the Qur'an, bees are the subject of the longest commentary:

--Sura 16, verses 68 and 69:[72]

"Thy Lord inspired the bees: Choose your dwelling in the hills, in the trees and in what (man) built. Eat of all fruit and follow the ways of your Lord in humility. From within their bodies comes a liquor of different colours where is a remedy for men."

It is difficult to know what exactly is meant by the order to follow the ways of the Lord in humility, unless it is to be seen in general terms. All that may be said, with regard to the knowledge that has been gained of their behaviour, is that here-as in each of the three animal cases mentioned as examples in the Qur'an-there is a remarkable nervous organization supporting their behaviour. It is known that the pattern of a bee's dance is a means of communication to other bees; in this way, bees are able to convey to their own species the direction and distance of flowers from which nectar is to be gathered. The famous experiment performed by von Frisch has shown the meaning of this insect's movement which is intended to transmit information between worker bees.

Spiders

Spiders are mentioned in the Qur'an to stress the flimsiness of their dwelling which is the most fragile of all. They have a refuge that is as precarious, according to the Qur'an, as the dwelling of those who have chosen masters other than God.

--sura 29, verse 41:

"Those who choose masters other than God are like the spider when it takes for itself a dwelling. Verily, the flimsiest dwelling is the dwelling of the spider. If they but knew."

A spider's web is indeed constituted of silken threads secreted by the animal's glands and their calibre is infinitely fine. Its fragility cannot be imitated by man. Naturalists are intrigued by the extraordinary pattern of work recorded by the animal's nervous cells, which allows it to produce a geometrically perfect web.

Birds

Birds are frequently mentioned in the Qur'an. They appear in episodes in the life of Abraham, Joseph, David, Solomon and Jesus. These references do not however have any bearing on the subject in hand.

The verse concerning the existence of animal communities on the ground and bird communities in the sky has been noted above:

--sura 6 verse 38:

"There is no animal on the earth, no bird which flies on wings, that (does not belong to) communities like you. We have not neglected anything in the Book (of Decrees) . Then to their Lord they will be gathered."

Two other verses highlight the birds' strict submission to God's Power.

--sura 16, verse 79:

"Do they not look at the birds subjected in the atmosphere of the sky? None can hold them up (in His Power) except God."

--sura 67, verse 19:

"Have they not looked at the birds above them spreading their wings out and folding them? None can hold them up (in his Power) except the Beneficent." The translation of one single word in each of these verses is a very delicate matter. The translation given here expresses the idea that God holds the birds up in His Power. The Arabic verb in question is *amsaka*, whose original meaning is 'to put one's hand on, seize, hold, hold someone back'.

An illuminating comparison can be made between these verses, which stress the extremely close dependence of the birds' behavior on divine order, to modern data showing the degree of perfection attained by certain species of bird with regard to the programming of their movements. It is only the existence of a migratory programme in the genetic code of birds that can account for the extremely long and complicated journeys which very young birds, without any prior experience and without any guide, are able to accomplish. This is in addition to their ability to return to their departure point on a prescribed date. Professor Hamburger in his book, *Power and Fragility* (La Puissance et la Fragilité)[73], gives as an example the well-known case of the 'mutton-bird' that lives in the Pacific, with its journey of over 16,500 miles in the shape of the figure 8[74]. It must be acknowledged that the highly complicated instructions for a journey of this kind simply have to be contained in the bird's nervous cells. They are most definitely programmed, but who is the programmer?

4. The Source of the Constituents of Animal Milk.

This is defined in the Qur'an in strict accordance with the data of modern knowledge (sura 16, verse 66). The translation and interpretation of this verse given here is my own because even modern translations habitually give it a meaning which is, in my opinion, hardly acceptable. Here are two examples:

--R. Blachère's translation:[75]

"Verily, in your cattle there is a lesson for you! We give you a pure milk to drink, excellent for its drinkers; (it comes) from what, in their bellies, is between digested food and blood."

--Professor Hamidullah's translation:[76]

"Verily, there is food for thought in your cattle. From what is in their bellies, among their excrement and blood, We make you drink pure milk, easy for drinkers to imbibe."

If these texts were shown to a physiologist, he would reply that they were extremely obscure, the reason being that there hardly appears to be much agreement between them and modern notions, even on a very elementary level. These translations are the work of highly eminent Arabists. It is a well known fact however, that a translator, even an expert, is liable to make mistakes in the translation of scientific statements, unless he happens to be a specialist in the discipline in question.

The most valid translation seems to me to be the following:

"Verily, in cattle there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of what is inside their bodies, coming from a conjunction between the contents of the intestine and the blood, a milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it." (sura 16, verse 66)

This interpretation is very close to the one given in the *Muntakab*, 1973, edited by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo, which relies for its support on modern physiology.

From the point of view of its vocabulary, the proposed translation may be justified as follows:

I have translated «inside their bodies' and not, as R. Blachère and Professor Hamidullah have done, 'inside their bellies'. This is because the word *batn* also means 'middle', «interior of something', as well as 'belly'. The word does not here have a meaning that is anatomically precise. 'Inside their bodies' seems to concur perfectly with the context.

The notion of a 'primary origin' of the constituents of milk is expressed by the word *min* (in English 'from') and the idea of a conjunction by the word *baini*. The latter not only signifies «among' but also 'between' in the other translations quoted. It is however also used to express the idea that two things or two people are brought together.

From a scientific point of view, physiological notions must be called upon to grasp the meaning of this verse.

The substances that ensure the general nutrition of the body come from chemical transformations which occur along the length of the digestive tract. These substances come from the contents of the intestine. On arrival in the intestine at the appropriate stage of chemical transformation, they pass through its wall and towards the systemic circulation. This passage is effected in two ways: either directly, by what are called the 'lymphatic vessels', or indirectly, by the portal circulation. This conducts them first to the liver, where they undergo alterations, and from here they then emerge to join the systemic circulation. In this way everything passes through the bloodstream.

The constituents of milk are secreted by the mammary glands. These are nourished, as it were, by the product of food digestion brought to them via the bloodstream. Blood therefore plays the role of collector and conductor of what has been extracted from food, and it brings nutrition to the mammary glands, the producers of milk, as it does to any other organ.

Here the initial process which sets everything else in motion is the bringing together of the contents of the intestine and blood at the level of the intestinal wall itself. This very precise concept is the result of the discoveries made in the chemistry and physiology of the digestive system. It was totally unknown at the time of the Prophet Muhammad and has been understood only in recent times. The discovery of the circulation of the blood, was made by Harvey roughly ten centuries after the Qur'anic Revelation.

I consider that the existence in the Qur'an of the verse referring to these concepts can have no human explanation on account of the period in which they were formulated.

Human Reproduction

From the moment ancient human writings enter into detail (however slight) on the subject of reproduction, they inevitably make statements that are inaccurate. In the Middle Ages-and even in more recent time-reproduction was surrounded by all sorts of myths and superstitions. How could it have been otherwise, considering the fact that to understand its complex mechanisms, man first had to possess a knowledge of anatomy, the discovery of the microscope had to be made, and the so-called basic sciences had to be founded which were to nurture physiology, embryology, obstetrics, etc.

The situation is quite different in the Qur'an. The Book mentions precise mechanisms in many places and describes clearly-defined stages in reproduction, without providing a single statement marred by inaccuracy. Everything in the Qur'an is explained in simple terms which are easily understandable to man and in strict accordance with what was to be discovered much later on.

Human reproduction is referred to in several dozen verses of the Qur'an, in various contexts. It is explained through statements which deal with one or more specific points. They must be assembled to give a general idea of the verses as a whole, and here, as for the other subjects already examined, the commentary is in this way made easier.

REMINDER OF CERTAIN BASIC CONCEPTS.

It is imperative to recall certain basic concepts which were unknown at the time of the Qur'anic Revelation and the centuries that followed.

Human reproduction is effected by a series of processes which we share in common with mammals. The starting point is the fertilization of an ovule which has detached itself from the ovary.

It takes place in the Fallopian tubes half-way through the menstrual cycle. The fertilizing agent is the male sperm, or more exactly, the spermatozoon, a single fertilizing cell being all that is

needed. To ensure fertilization therefore, an infinitely small quantity of spermatid liquid containing a large number of spermatozoons (tens of millions at a time) is required. This liquid is produced by the testicles and temporarily stored in a system of reservoirs and canals that finally lead into the urinary tract; other glands are situated along the latter which contribute their own additional secretions to the sperm itself.

The implantation of the egg fertilized by this process takes place at a precise spot in the female reproductive system: it descends into the uterus via a Fallopian tube and lodges in the body of the uterus where it soon literally implants itself by insertion into the thickness of the mucosa and of the muscle, once the placenta has been formed and with the aid of the latter. If the implantation of the fertilized egg takes place, for example, in the Fallopian tubes instead of in the uterus, pregnancy will be interrupted.

Once the embryo begins to be observable to the naked eye, it looks like a small mass of flesh at the centre of which the appearance of a human being is at first indistinguishable. It grows there in progressive stages which are very well known today; they lead to the bone structure, the muscles, the nervous system, the circulation, and the viscerae, etc.

These notions will serve as the terms of reference against which the statements in the Qur'an on reproduction are to be compared.

HUMAN REPRODUCTION IN THE QUR'AN.

It is not easy to gain an idea of what the Qur'an contains on this subject. The first difficulty arises from the fact already mentioned, i.e. that the statements dealing with this subject are scattered throughout the Book. This is not however a major difficulty. What is more likely to mislead the inquiring reader is, once again, the problem of vocabulary.

In fact there are still many translations and commentaries in circulation today that can give a completely false idea of the Qur'anic Revelation on this subject to the scientist who reads them. The majority of translations describe, for example, man's formation from a 'blood clot' or an 'adhesion'. A statement of this kind is totally unacceptable to scientists specializing in this field. In the paragraph dealing with the implantation of the egg in the maternal uterus, we shall see the reasons why distinguished Arabists who lack a scientific background have made such blunders.

This observation implies how great the importance of an association between linguistic and scientific knowledge is when it comes to grasping the meaning of Qur'anic statements on reproduction.

The Qur'an sets out by stressing the successive transformations the embryo undergoes before reaching its destination in the maternal uterus.

--sura 82, verses 6 to 8:

"O Man! Who deceives you about your Lord the Noble, Who created you and fashioned you in due proportion and gave you any form He willed."

--sura 71, verse 14:

"(God) fashioned you in (different) stages."

Along with this very general observation, the text of the Qur'an draws attention to several points concerning reproduction which might be listed as follows:

- 1) fertilization is performed by only a very small volume of liquid.
- 2) the constituents of the fertilizing liquid.
- 3) the implantation of the fertilized egg.
- 4) the evolution of the embryo.

1. Fertilization is Performed by Only a Very Small Volume of Liquid.

The Qur'an repeats this concept eleven times using the following expression:

--sura 16, verse 4:

"(God) fashioned man from a small quantity (of sperm)."

The Arabic word *nutfā* has been translated by the words 'small quantity (of sperm)' because we do not have the terms that are strictly appropriate. This word comes from a verb signifying 'to dribble, to trickle'; it is used to describe what remains at the bottom of a bucket that has been emptied out. It therefore indicates a very small quantity of liquid. Here it is sperm because the word is associated in another verse with the word sperm.

--sura 75, verse 37:

"Was (man) not a small quantity of sperm which has been poured out?"

Here the Arabic word *mani* signifies sperm.

Another verse indicates that the small quantity in question is put in a 'firmly established lodging' (*qarar*) which obviously means the genital organs.

--sura 23, verse 13. God is speaking:

"Then We placed (man) as a small quantity (of sperm) in a safe lodging firmly established."

It must be added that the adjective which in this text refers to the 'firmly established lodging' *makīn* is, I think, hardly translatable. It expresses the idea of a firmly established and respected place. However this may be, it refers to the spot where man grows in the maternal organism. It IS important to stress the concept of a very small quantity of liquid needed in the fertilization process, which is strictly in agreement with what we know on this subject today.

2. The Constituents of the Fertilizing Liquid.

The Qur'an describes the liquid enabling fertilization to take place in terms which it is interesting to examine:

- a) 'sperm', as has been stated precisely (sura 75, verse 37)
- b) 'a liquid poured out'. "Man was fashioned from a liquid poured out" (sura 86, verse 6)
- c) 'a despised liquid' (sura 32, verse 8 and sura 77, verse 20)

The adjective 'despised' (*mahin*) would, it seems, be interpreted not so much on account of the nature of the liquid itself, as more the fact that it is emitted through the outlet of the urinary tract, using the channels that are employed for passing urine.

- d) 'Mixtures' or 'mingled liquids' (*amsaj*): "Verily, we fashioned man from a small quantity of mingled liquids" (sura 76, verse 2)

Many commentators, like professor Hamidullah, consider these liquids to be the male and female agents. The same view was shared by older commentators, who could not have had any idea of the physiology of fertilization, especially its biological conditions in the case of the woman. They thought that the word simply meant the unification of the two elements.

Modern authors however, like the commentator of the *Muntakab* edited by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo, have corrected this view and note here that the 'small quantity of sperm' is made up of various component parts. The commentator in the *Muntakab* does not go into detail, but in my opinion it is a very judicious observation.

What are the components parts of sperm?

Spermatic liquid is formed by various secretions which come from the following glands:

- a) the testicles: the secretion of the male genital gland contains spermatozoons, which are elongated cells with a long flagellum; they are bathed in a sero-fluid liquid.
- b) the seminal vesicles. these organs are reservoirs of spermatozoons and are placed near the prostate gland; they also secrete their own liquid but it does not contain any fertilizing agents.
- c) the prostate gland: this secretes a liquid which gives the sperm its creamy texture and characteristic odour.
- d) the glands annexed to the urinary tract: Cooper's or Méry's glands secrete a stringy liquid and Littré's glands give off mucous.

These are the origins of the 'mingled liquids' which the Qur'an would appear to refer to.

There is, however, more to be said on this subject. When the Qur'an talks of a fertilizing liquid composed of different components, it also informs us that man's progeny will be maintained by something which may be extracted from this liquid.

This is the meaning of verse 8, sura 32:

"(God) made his progeny from the quintessence of a despised liquid."

The Arabic word, translated here by the word 'quintessence', is *sulala*. It signifies 'something which is extracted, the issue of something else, the best part of a thing'. In whatever way it is translated, it refers to a part of a whole.

Fertilization of the egg and reproduction are produced by a cell that is very elongated: its dimensions are measured in ten thousandths of a millimetre. In normal conditions[77], only one single cell among several tens of millions produced by a man will actually penetrate the ovule; a large number of them are left behind and never complete the journey which leads from the vagina to the ovule, passing through the uterus and Fallopian tubes. It is therefore an infinitesimally small part of the extract from a liquid whose composition is highly complex which actually fulfills its function.

In consequence, it is difficult not to be struck by the agreement between the text of the Qur'an and the scientific knowledge we possess today of these phenomena.

3. The Implantation of the Egg In the Female Genital Organs.

Once the egg has been fertilized in the Fallopian tube it descends to lodge inside the uterus; this is called the 'implantation of the egg'. The Qur'an names the lodging of the fertilized egg womb:

-sura 22, verse 5:

"We cause whom We[78] will to rest in the womb for an appointed term."

The implantation of the egg in the uterus (womb) is the result of the development of villousities, veritable elongations of the egg, which, like roots in the soil, draw nourishment from the thickness of the uterus necessary to the egg's growth. These formations make the egg literally cling to the uterus. This is a discovery of modern times.

The act of clinging is described five different times in the Qur'an. Firstly in verses 1 and 2 of sura 96:

"Read, in the name of thy Lord Who fashioned,
Who fashioned man from something which clings."

'Something which clings' is the translation of the word '*alaq*'. It is the original meaning of the word. A meaning derived from it, 'blood clot', often figures in translation; it is a mistake against which one should guard: man has never passed through the stage of being a 'blood clot'. The same is true for another translation of this term, 'adhesion' which is equally inappropriate. The original sense of 'something which clings' corresponds exactly to today's firmly established reality.

This concept is recalled in four other verses which describe successive transformations from the small quantity of sperm through to the end:

--sura 22, verse 5:

"We have fashioned you from . . . something which clings."

--sura 23, verse 14:

"We have fashioned the small quantity (of sperm) into something which clings."

--sura 40, verse 67:

"(God) fashioned you from a small quantity (of sperm), from something which clings."

-sura 75, verse 37-38:

"Was (man) not a small quantity of sperm which has been poured out? After that he was something which clings; then God fashioned him in due proportion."

The organ which harbours the pregnancy is qualified in the Qur'an by a word which, as we have seen, is still used in Arabic to signify the uterus. In some suras, it is called a 'lodging firmly established' (sura 23, verse 13, quoted above and sura 77, verse 21)[79].

4. Evolution of the Embryo inside the Uterus.

The Qur'anic description of certain stages in the development of the embryo corresponds exactly to what we today know about it, and the Qur'an does not contain a single statement that is open to criticism from modern science.

After 'the thing which clings' (an expression which is well-founded, as we have seen) the Qur'an informs us that the embryo passes through the stage of 'chewed flesh', then osseous tissue appears and is clad in flesh (defined by a different word from the preceding which signifies 'intact flesh').

--sura 23, verse 14:

"We fashioned the thing which clings into a chewed lump of flesh and We fashioned the chewed flesh into bones and We clothed the bones with intact flesh."

'Chewed flesh' is the translation of the word *mudga*; 'intact flesh' is *lahm*. This distinction needs to be stressed. The embryo is initially a small mass. At a certain stage in its development, it looks to the naked eye like chewed flesh. The bone structure develops inside this mass in what is called the mesenchyma. The bones that are formed are covered in muscle; the word *lahm* applies to them.

Another verse which requires extremely delicate interpretation is the following:

--sura 39, verse 6:

"(God) fashions you inside the bodies of your mothers, formation after formation, in three (veils of) darkness." (*zulumat*)

Modern interpreters of the Qur'an see in this verse the three anatomical layers that protect the infant during gestation: the abdominal wall, the uterus itself, and the surroundings of the foetus (placenta, embryonic membranes, amniotic fluid).

I am obliged to quote this verse for the sake of completeness; the interpretation given here does not seem to me to be disputable from an anatomical point of view but is this what the text of the Qur'an really means?

It is known how certain parts appear to be completely out of proportion during embryonic development with what is later to become the individual, while others remain in proportion.

This is surely the meaning of the word *mukallaq* which signifies 'shaped in proportion' as used in verse 5, sura 22 to describe this phenomenon.

"We fashioned . . . into something which clings . . . into a lump of flesh in proportion and out of proportion."

The Qur'an also describes the appearance of the senses and the viscerae:

--sura 32, verse 9:

"(God) appointed for you the sense of hearing, sight and the viscerae."

It refers to the formation of the sexual organs:

--sura 53, verses 45-46:

"(God) fashioned the two of a pair, the male and the female, from a small quantity (of sperm) when it is poured out."

The formation of the sexual organs is described in two sura of the Qur'an:

--sura 35, verse 11:

"God created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then He made you pairs (the male and female)."

--sura 75, verse 39:

"And, (God) made of him a pair, the male and female."

As has already been noted, all statements in the Qur'an must be compared with today's firmly established concepts: the agreement between them is very clear. It is however very important to compare them with the general beliefs on this subject that were held at the time of the Qur'anic Revelation in order to realize just how far people were in those days from having views on these problems similar to those expressed here in the Qur'an. There can be no doubt that they would have been unable to interpret the Revelation in the way we can today because we are helped by the data modern knowledge affords us. It was, in fact, only during the Nineteenth century that people had a slightly clearer view of this question.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the most diversified doctrines originated in unfounded myths and speculations: they persisted for several centuries after this period. The most fundamental stage in the history of embryology was Harvey's statement (1651) that "all life initially comes from an egg". At this time however, when nascent science had nevertheless benefited greatly (for the subject in hand) from the invention of the microscope, people were still talking about the respective roles of the egg and the spermatozoon. Buffon, the great naturalist, was one of those in favor of the egg theory, but Bonnet supported the theory of the seeds being 'packed together'.

the ovaries of Eve, the mother of the human race, were supposed to have contained the seeds of all human beings, packed together one inside the other. This hypothesis came into favor in the Eighteenth century.

More than a thousand years before our time, at a period when whimsical doctrines still prevailed, men had a knowledge of the Qur'an. The statements it contains express in simple terms truths of primordial importance which man has taken centuries to discover.

THE QUR'AN AND SEX EDUCATION.

Our epoch believes that it has made manifold discoveries in all possible fields. It is thought that great innovations have been made in the field of sex education, and the knowledge of the facts of life which has been opened up to young people is regarded as an achievement of the modern world. Previous centuries were noted for their deliberate obscurity on this point and many people say that religion-without stating which religion-is the cause of it.

The information set out above is proof however that fourteen centuries ago theoretical questions (as it were) on human reproduction were brought to man's attention. This was done as far as was possible, taking into account the fact that the anatomical and physiological data needed for further explanations were lacking. One should also remember that, to be understood, it was necessary to use simple language suited to the level of comprehension of those who listened to the Preaching.

Practical considerations have not been silently ignored. There are many details in the Qur'an on the practical side of life in general, and the way man should behave in the many situations of his existence. His sex life is no exception.

Two verses in the Qur'an deal with sexual relations themselves. They are described in terms which unite the need for precision with that of decency. When translations and explanatory commentaries are consulted however, one is struck by the divergences between them. I have pondered for a long time on the translation of such verses, and am indebted to Doctor A. K. Giraud, Former Professor at the Faculty of Medicine, Beirut, for the following:

--sura 86, verse 6 and 7:

"(Man) was fashioned from a liquid poured out. It issued (as a result) of the conjunction of the sexual area of the man and the sexual area of the woman." The sexual area of the man is indicated in the text of the Qur'an by the word *sulb* (singular). The sexual areas of the woman are designated in the Qur'an by the word *tara'ib* (plural).

This is the translation which appears to be most satisfactory. It is different from the one that is often given by English and French translators, i.e. " (Man) has been created by a liquid poured out which issues from between the vertebral column and the bones of the breast." This would seem more to be an interpretation than a translation. It is hardly comprehensible.

The behavior of a man in his intimate relationships with his wife is stated explicitly.

There is the order concerning the menstruation period contained in verses 222 and 223, sura 2; God gives the following command to the Prophet:

--sura 2, verses 222 and 223:

"They (the Believers) question thee concerning menstruation. Say: This is an evil. Keep away from women during menstruation and do not approach them until they are clean. When they have purified themselves, go to them, as God ordered it to you.

"Verily, God loves the repentants and loves those who purified themselves.

"Your wives are a tilth. Go to your tilth as you will. Do (some good act) for your souls beforehand."

The beginning of this passage is very clear in meaning: it formally forbids a man to have sexual contact with a woman who has her period. The second part describes the process of tilling which the sower performs before sowing the seed which is to germinate and produce a new plant. Through this image therefore, stress is indirectly laid on the importance of bearing in mind the final purpose of sexual contact, i.e. reproduction. The translation of the final phrase is by R. Blachère: it contains an order which seems to refer to the preliminaries before sexual contact.

The orders given here are of a very general kind. The problem of contraception has been raised with regard to these verses: neither here, nor anywhere else, is reference made to this subject. Nor is provoked abortion referred to. The numerous passages quoted above on the successive transformations of the embryo make it quite clear, however, that man is considered to be constituted as of the stage described by the existence of 'something which clings'. This being so, the absolute respect of the individual human being, which is referred to so often in the Qur'an, brings with it a total condemnation of provoked abortion. This attitude is today shared by all monotheistic religions.

Sexual relations are permitted at night during the Fast in the month of Ramadan. The verse concerning Ramadan is as follows:

--sura 2, verse 187:

"Permitted to you, on the night of the fast, is to break chastity with your wives. They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them. So hold intercourse with them and seek what God has ordained for you."

In contrast to this, no exception to the rule is made for pilgrims in Makka during the celebration days of the Pilgrimage.

--sura 2, verse 197:

"For whom undertakes (the duty of) the Pilgrimage in its time, no wooing and no license."

This prohibition is formal, as is the fact that other activities are forbidden, e.g. hunting, fighting, etc.

Menstruation is again mentioned in the Qur'an in connection with divorce. The Book contains the following verse:

--sura 65, verse 4:

"For your wives who despair of menstruation, if you doubt about them, their period of waiting will be three months. For those who never have their monthly periods and those who are pregnant their period will be until they lay down their burden."

The waiting period referred to here is the time between the announcement of the divorce and the time it comes into effect. Those women of whom it is said 'they despair of menstruation' have reached the menopause. A precautionary period of three months is envisaged for them. Once this period is completed, divorced women who have reached the menopause may remarry.

For those who have not yet menstruated, the pregnancy period has to be awaited. For pregnant women, divorce only comes into effect once the child is born.

All these laws are in perfect agreement with physiological data. One can, furthermore, find in the Qur'an the same judicious legal provision in the texts dealing with widowhood.

Thus, the theoretical statements dealing with reproduction, and the practical instructions on the sex life of couples, do not contradict and cannot be placed in opposition to the data we have from modern knowledge, nor with anything that can be logically derived from it.

Qur'anic and Biblical Narrations

General Outlines

A large number of subjects dealt with in the Bible are also found in the Qur'an. Firstly, there are narrations referring to the Prophets; Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Elias, Jonah, Job and Moses; the Kings of Israel; Saul, David, Solomon-to name just some of the main narrations they share in common. There then follow more specific accounts of great events in the course of which the supernatural has intervened, e.g. the Creation of the Earth and Heavens, the Creation of Man, the Flood, the Exodus. Finally, there is all that has to do with Jesus and His mother Mary as far as it concerns the New Testament.

What reflections do the subjects dealt with in the two Scriptures provoke when viewed in the light of our modern knowledge of them from extra-Scriptural sources?

Parallel: Qur'an/Gospel and Modern Knowledge.

With regard to the parallel of Qur'an/Gospels, one must first note that none of the subjects referred to in the Gospels, which were criticized from a scientific point of view (see Part Two of this book), is quoted in the Qur'an.

Jesus is referred to many times in the Qur'an, e.g. Mary's annunciation of the nativity to his father, the annunciation of the miraculous nativity to Mary, Jesus's stature as a Prophet of the highest order, His role as a Messiah, the Revelation He directs to Man which confirms and modifies the Torah, His preachings, His disciples and apostles, the miracles, His Ascension to God, His role in the Last Judgment, etc.

Suras 3 and 19 of the Qur'an (the second of which bears Mary's name) devote long passages to Jesus's family. They describe His mother Mary's nativity, her youth and the annunciation of her miraculous motherhood. Jesus is always called 'Son of Mary'. His ancestry is exclusively given with regard to His mother's side, which is quite logical since Jesus had no biological father. Here the Qur'an differs from Matthew's and Luke's Gospels: as we have already seen, they give the paternal genealogies of Jesus which are, moreover, different from each other.

In the Qur'an, Jesus is placed according to His maternal genealogy in the line of Noah, Abraham, and Mary's father (Imran in the Qur'an):

--sura 3, verses 33 and 34:

"God chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above all His creatures, as descendants one from another."

So Jesus is descended from Noah and Abraham on His mother Mary's side, and from her father Imran. The errors made in the naming of the 'ancestors of Jesus' found in the Gospels are not present in the Qur'an, nor are the impossibilities in the genealogies contained in the Old Testament of Abraham's ancestry, both of which were examined in the first and second parts of this book.

Once again, this fact must be noted if one is to be objective, and yet again its great importance appears very clearly in the face of the unfounded statements which are made claiming that Muhammad, the author of the Qur'an, largely copied the Bible. One wonders in that case who or what reason compelled him to avoid copying the passages the Bible contains on Jesus's ancestry, and to insert at this point in the Qur'an the corrections that put his text above any criticism from modern knowledge. The Gospels and Old Testament texts are quite the opposite; from this point of view they are totally unacceptable.

Parallel: Qur'an/ Old Testament and Modern Knowledge.

In the case of the Old Testament, certain aspects of this parallel have already been dealt with. The Creation of the world, for example, was the subject of a critical study made in the Old Testament section of this book. The same subject was examined with regard to the Qur'anic Revelation. Comparisons were made and there is no need to cover this ground again.

It seems that historical knowledge is too vague and archaeological data too scarce for parallels to be established in the light of modern knowledge on problems concerning the Kings of Israel, who form the subject of narrations in both the Qur'an and the Bible.

Whether or not one can tackle the problem of the Prophets in the light of modern data depends on the extent to which the events described have left traces which may or may not have come down to us.

There are however two subjects dealt with in both the Qur'an and the Bible which should command our attention and which need to be examined in the light of modern knowledge. They are as follows:

- the Flood,
- the Exodus.

- The first because it has not left traces in the history of civilization which support the Biblical narration, whereas modern data do not permit us to criticize the narration contained in the Qur'an.

- The second because the Biblical and Qur'anic narrations evidently complement each other in their broad outlines, and modern data seem to provide both of them with remarkable historical support.

The Flood

The Biblical Narration of the Flood and the Criticism Leveled at It- A Reminder.

The examination of the Old Testament description of the Flood in the first part of this book led to the following observations:

There is not just one description of the Flood, but two, written at different times;

- the Yahvist version which dates from the Ninth century B.C.

- the Sacerdotal version dating from the Sixth century B.C., so called because it was the work of priests of the time.

These two narrations are not juxtaposed, but interwoven so that part of one is fitted in-between parts of the other, i.e. paragraphs from one source alternate with passage from the other.

The commentary to the translation of Genesis by Father de Vaux, a professor at the Biblical School of Jerusalem, shows very clearly how the paragraphs are distributed between the two sources. The narration begins and ends with a Yahvist passage. There are ten Yahvist paragraphs altogether and between each one a Sacerdotal passage has been inserted (there are a total of nine

Sacerdotal paragraphs). This mosaic of texts is only coherent when read from a point of view which takes the succession of episodes into account, since there are blatant contradictions between the two sources. Father de Vaux describes them as "two accounts of the Flood, in which the cataclysm is caused by different agents and lasts different lengths of time, and where Noah receives into the Ark a different number of animals."

When seen in the light of modern knowledge, the Biblical description of the Flood as a whole is unacceptable for the following reasons:

- a) The Old Testament ascribes to it the character of a universal cataclysm.
- b) Whereas the paragraphs from the Yahvist text do not date the Flood, the Sacerdotal text situates it at a point in time where a cataclysm of this kind could not have occurred.

The following are arguments supporting this opinion:

The Sacerdotal narration states quite precisely that the Flood took place when Noah was 600 years old. According to the genealogies in chapter 5 of Genesis (also taken from the Sacerdotal text and quoted in the first part of this book), we know that Noah is said to have been born 1,056 years after Adam. Consequently, the Flood would have taken place 1,655 years after the creation of Adam. The genealogical table of Abraham moreover, taken from the same text and given in Genesis (11, 10-32), allows us to estimate that Abraham was born 292 years after the Flood. As we know that (according to the Bible) Abraham was alive in roughly 1850 B.C., the Flood would therefore be situated in the Twenty-first or Twenty-second century B.C. This calculation is in strict keeping with the information in old editions of the Bible which figures prominently at the head of the Biblical text.

This was at a time when the lack of human knowledge on the subject was such that the chronological data contained in the Bible were accepted without question by its readers-for want of any arguments to the contrary.[80]

How is it possible to conceive today of a universal cataclysm in the Twenty-first or Twenty-second century B.C. which destroyed life on all the earth's surface (except for the people and animals in the Ark)? By this time, civilizations had flourished in several parts of the globe, and their vestiges have now come down to posterity. In Egypt at this time, for example, the Intermediate Period followed the end of the Old Kingdom and preceded the beginning of the Middle Kingdom. In view of our knowledge of the history of this period, it would be absurd to maintain that the Flood had destroyed all civilization at this time.

Thus It may be affirmed from a historical point of view that the narration of the Flood as it is presented in the Bible is in evident contradiction with modern knowledge. The formal proof of man's manipulation of the Scriptures is the existence of the two texts.

The Narration of the Flood Contained in the Qur'an.

The Qur'an gives a general version which is different from that contained in the Bible and does not give rise to any criticisms from a historical point of view.

It does not provide a continuous narration of the Flood. Numerous suras talk of the punishment inflicted upon Noah's people. The most complete account of this is in sura 11, verses 25 to 49. Sura 71, which bears Noah's name, describes above all Noah's preachings, as do verses 105 to 115, sura 26. Before going into the actual course taken by events, we must consider the Flood as described in the Qur'an by relating it to the general context of the punishment God inflicted on communities guilty of gravely infringing His Commandments.

Whereas the Bible describes a universal Flood intended to punish ungodly humanity as a whole, the Qur'an, in contrast, mentions several punishments inflicted on certain specifically defined communities.

This may be seen in verses 35 to 39, sura 25:

"We gave Moses the Scripture and appointed his brother Aaron with him as vizier. We said: Go to the people who have denied Our signs. We destroyed them completely. When the people of Noah denied the Messengers, We drowned them and We made of them a sign for mankind. (We destroyed the tribes) of Âd and Tamud, the companions of Rass and many generations between them. We warned each of them by examples and We annihilated them completely."

Sura 7, verses 59 to 93 contains a reminder of the punishments brought upon Noah's people, the Âd, the Tamud, Lot (Sodom) and Madian respectively.

Thus the Qur'an presents the cataclysm of the Flood as a punishment specifically intended for Noah's people: this is the first basic difference between the two narrations.

The second fundamental difference is that the Qur'an, in contrast to the Bible, does not date the Flood in time and gives no indication as to the duration of the cataclysm itself.

The causes of the flooding are roughly the same in both narrations. The Sacerdotal description in the Bible (Genesis 7, 11) cites two causes which occurred simultaneously. "On that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened." The Qur'an records the following in verses 11 and 12, sura 54:

"We opened the Gates of Heaven with pouring water. And We caused the ground to gush forth springs, so the waters met according to the decree which has been ordained."

The Qur'an is very precise about the contents of the Ark. The order God gave to Noah was faithfully executed and it was to do the following:

--sura 11, verse 40:

"(In the Ark) load a pair of every kind, thy family, save this one against whom the word has already gone forth, and those who believe. But only a few had believed with him."

The person excluded from the family is an outcast son of Noah. We learn (sura 11, verses 45 and 46) how Noah's supplications on this person's behalf to God were unable to make Him alter His decision. Apart from Noah's family (minus the outcast son), the Qur'an refers to the few other passengers on board the Ark who had believed in God.

The Bible does not mention the latter among the occupants of the Ark. In fact, it provides us with three different versions of the Ark's contents:

--according to the Yahvist version, a distinction is made between 'pure' animals and birds, and 'impure' animals (seven[81] pairs, i.e. seven males and seven females, of each 'pure' species, was taken into the Ark and only one pair of each 'impure' species).

-according to a modified Yahvist verse (Genesis 7, 8) there was only one pair of each species, whether 'pure' or 'impure'. -according to the Sacerdotal version, there was Noah, his family (with no exceptions) and a pair taken from each species.

The narration in the Qur'an of the flooding itself is contained in sura 11, verses 25 to 49 and in sura 23, verses 23 to 30. The Biblical narrative does not present any important differences.

In the Bible, the place where the Ark comes to rest is in the Ararat Mountains (Genesis 8, 4) and for the Qur'an it is the *Judi* (sura 11, verse 44.) This mountain is said to be the highest of the Ararat range in Armenia, but nothing proves that the names were not changed by man to tally with the two narratives. This is confirmed by R. Blachère: according to him there is a peak in Arabia named Judi. The agreement of names may well be artificial.

In conclusion, it is possible to state categorically what major differences exist here between the Biblical and Qur'anic narrations. Some of them escape critical examination because objective data are lacking. When, however, it is possible to check the statements in the Scriptures in the light of the established data, the incompatibility between the Biblical narration-i.e. the information given on its place in time and geographical extent-and the discoveries that have contributed to modern knowledge is all too clear. In contrast to this, the narration contained in the Qur'an is free from anything which might give rise to objective criticism. One might ask if it is possible that, between the time of the Biblical narration and the one contained in the Qur'an, man could have acquired knowledge that shed light on this event. The answer is no, because from the time of the Old Testament to the Qur'an, the only document man possessed on this ancient story was the Bible itself. If human factors are unable to account for the changes in the narrations which affected their meaning with regard to modern knowledge, another explanation has to be accepted, i.e. a Revelation which came after the one contained in the Bible.

The Exodus

With the Exodus from Egypt of Moses and his followers, (the first stage of their move to Canaan), we come to an event of great importance. It is an established historical event which appears in a known context, in spite of occasional allegations one finds which tend to attribute to it a largely legendary character.

In the Old Testament, the Exodus forms the second book of the Pentateuch or Torah, along with a narration of the journey through the wilderness and the alliance (covenant) concluded with God on Mount Sinai. It is natural for the Qur'an to devote a great deal of space to it too: an account of the dealings Moses and his brother Aaron had with the Pharaoh and of the exit from Egypt is found in more than ten suras containing long descriptions, e.g. suras, 7, 10, 20 and 26, along with more abridged versions and even simple reminders. The name of Pharaoh, the main character on the Egyptian side, is repeated (to the best of my knowledge) seventy-four times in the Qur'an in 27 suras.

A study of both the Qur'anic and Biblical narrations is especially interesting here because, in contrast to what has been noted in the case of the Flood (for example), in the main, the two narrations have many points in common. There are certainly divergences, but the Biblical narration has considerable historical value, as we shall see. This is because it helps to identify the Pharaoh, or rather the two pharaohs in question. This hypothesis, which starts with the Bible, is complemented by the information contained in the Qur'an. Modern data are added to these two Scriptural sources and it is thus possible, through a confrontation between the Bible, the Qur'an and today's knowledge, to situate this episode from the Holy Scriptures in a historical context.

THE EXODUS ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

The Biblical narration begins with a reminder of the Jews' entry into Egypt with Jacob, who joined Joseph there. Later on, according to Exodus 1, 8:
"Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph."

The period of oppression followed; the Pharaoh ordered the Jews to build the cities of Pithom and Ramesses (to use the names given to them in the Bible) (Exodus I, 11). To avoid a population explosion among the Hebrews, Pharaoh ordered each new-born son to be thrown into the river. Moses was nevertheless preserved by his mother for the first three months of his life before she finally decided to put him in a rush basket on the river's edge. The Pharaoh's daughter discovered him, rescued him and gave him to a nurse, none other than his own mother. This was because Moses's sister had watched to see who would find the baby, had pretended not to recognize him and then recommended to the Princess a nurse who was really the child's mother. He was treated as one of the Pharaoh's sons and given the name 'Moses'.

As a young man, Moses left for a country called Midian where he married and lived for a long time. We read an important detail in Exodus 2, 23:
"In the course of those many days the king of Egypt died."

God ordered Moses to go and find the Pharaoh and lead his brothers out of Egypt (the description of this order is given in the episode of the Burning Bush). Aaron, Moses's brother, helped him in this task. This is why Moses, once he had returned to Egypt, went with his brother to visit the Pharaoh who was the successor of the king under whose reign he had long ago been born.

The Pharaoh refused to allow the Jews in Moses's group to leave Egypt. God revealed Himself to Moses once again and ordered him to repeat his request to Pharaoh. According to the Bible, Moses was eighty years old at this time. Through magic, Moses showed the Pharaoh that he had supernatural powers. This was not enough however. God sent the famous plagues down upon Egypt. The rivers were changed into blood, there were invasions of frogs, gnats and swarms of flies, the cattle died, boils appeared on men and animals, there was hail and plagues of locusts, darkness and the death of the first-born. Nevertheless, the Pharaoh still did not allow the Hebrews to leave.

They therefore broke out of the city of Rameses, 600,000 of them[82] "besides women and children" (Exodus 12, 37). At this point Pharaoh "made ready his chariot and took his army .With him, and took six hundred picked charioteers and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them . . . Pharaoh, king of Egypt, pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly." (Exodus 14, 6 and 8). The Egyptians caught up with Moses's party beside the sea. Moses raised his staff, the sea parted before him and his followers walked across it without wetting their feet. "The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen." (Exodus 14, 23) "The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left." (Exodus 14, 28-29).

The text of Exodus is quite clear: Pharaoh was at the head of the pursuers. He perished because the text of Exodus notes that "not so much as one of them remained." The Bible repeats this detail moreover in the Psalms: Psalm 106, verse 11 and Psalm 136 verses 13 and 15 which are an act of thanks to God "Who divided the sea of Rushes[83] in sunder . . . and made Israel pass through the midst of it . . . but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the sea of Rushes." There can be no doubt therefore, that according to the Bible, the Pharaoh of the Exodus perished in the sea. The Bible does not record what became of his body.

THE EXODUS ACCORDING TO THE QUR'AN

In its broad outlines, the narration of the Exodus contained in the Qur'an is similar to that of the Bible. It has to be reconstituted, however, because it is made up of passages dispersed throughout the Book.

The Qur'an does not provide a name which enables us to identify who the reigning Pharaoh was at the time of Exodus, any more than the Bible does. All that is known is that one of his counsellors was called *Haman*. He is referred to six times in the Qur'an (sura 28, verses 6, 8 and 38, sura 29, verse 39 and sura 40, verses 24 and 36).

The Pharaoh is the Jews' oppressor:

--sura 14, verse 6:

"When Moses said to his people: Remember the favor of God to you when He delivered you

from Pharaoh's folk who imposed upon you a dreadful torment, slaughtered your sons and spared your women."

The oppression is recalled in the same terms in verse 141, sura 7. The Qur'an does not however mention the names of the cities built by the Jews in subjection, as does the Bible.

The episode where Moses is left by the riverside is recorded in sura 20 verses 39-40 and sura 28, verses 7 to 13. In the version contained in the Qur'an, Moses is taken in by Pharaoh's family. We find this in verses 8 and 9, sura 28:

"The family of Pharaoh took him up. (It was intended) that (Moses) should be to them an adversary and a cause of sorrow. Pharaoh, Haman and their hosts were sinners. Pharaoh's wife said: (He will be) a joy to the eye for me and you. Don't kill him. He may be of use to us or we may take him as a son. They did not sense (what was to come)."

Muslim tradition has it that it was Pharaoh's wife Asiya who took care of Moses. In the Qur'an, it was not the Pharaoh's wife who found him, but members of his household.

Moses's youth, his stay in Midian and marriage are described in sura 28, verses 13 to 28.

In particular, the episode of the Burning Bush is found in the first part of sura 20, and in sura 28, verses 30 to 35.

The Qur'an does not describe the ten plagues sent down upon Egypt as a divine chastisement (unlike the long description in the Bible), but simply mentions five plagues very briefly (sura 7, verse 133): flooding, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood.

The flight from Egypt is described in the Qur'an, but without any of the geographical data given in the Bible, nor the incredible numbers of people mentioned in the latter. It is difficult to imagine how 600,000 men plus their families could have stayed in the desert for a long time, as the Bible would have us believe.

This is how the death of Pharaoh pursuing the Hebrews is described:

--sura 20, verse 78:

"Pharaoh pursued them with his hosts and the sea covered them."

The Jews escaped. Pharaoh perished, but his body was found: a very important detail not mentioned in the Biblical narration.

--sura 10, verses 90 to 92. God is speaking:

"We took the Children of Israel across the sea. Pharaoh with his hosts pursued them in rebellion and hostility till, when the fact of his drowning overtook him, he said: I believe there is no God except the God in whom the Children of Israel believe. I am of those who submit themselves to Him.

"God said: 'What? Now !. Thou has rebelled and caused depravity. This day We save thee in thy body so that thou mayest be a sign for those who come after thee.' But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our signs."

This passage requires two points to be explained:

a) The spirit of rebellion and hostility referred to is to be understood in terms of Moses's attempt to persuade the Pharaoh.

b) The rescue of the Pharaoh refers to his corpse because it is stated quite clearly in verse 98, sura 11, that Pharaoh and his followers have been condemned to damnation:

--sura 11, verse 98 "Pharaoh will go before his people on the Day of Resurrection and will lead them to the fire." For those facts which can be checked with historical, geographical and archaeological data therefore, it should be noted that the Qur'anic and Biblical narrations differ on the following points:

--the absence in the Qur'an of place names, both of the cities built by the Hebrews in Moses's group, and on the route taken by the Exodus.

--the absence of any reference to the death of a Pharaoh during Moses's stay in Midian.

--the absence in the Qur'an of details concerning Moses's age when he addressed his request to the Pharaoh.

--the absence in the Qur'an of the numbering of Moses's followers. These figures are openly exaggerated in the Bible to incredible proportions (said to have been 600,000 men plus their families forming a community of more than two million inhabitants.)

--the absence of any mention in the Bible of the rescue of the Pharaoh's body after his death.

For our present purposes, the points to be noted because they are shared by both narrations are as follows:

--the confirmation contained in the Qur'an of Pharaoh's oppression of the Jews in Moses's group.

--the absence from both narrations of any mention of the King of Egypt's name.

--the confirmation contained in the Qur'an of the Pharaoh's death during the Exodus.

CONFRONTATION BETWEEN SCRIPTURAL DATA AND MODERN KNOWLEDGE

The narrations contained in the Bible and the Qur'an on the time spent by the sons of Israel in Egypt, and the way they left, give rise to data which may constitute matter for a confrontation with modern knowledge. In fact, the balance is very uneven because some data pose many problems while others hardly provide subject for discussion.

1. Examination of Certain Details Contained in the Narrations The Hebrews in Egypt

It is, apparently, quite possible to say (and without running much risk of being wrong) that the Hebrews remained in Egypt for 400 or 430 years, according to the Bible (Genesis 15, 13 and Exodus 12, 40). In spite of this discrepancy between Genesis and Exodus, which is of minor importance, the period may be said to have begun long after Abraham, when Joseph, son of Jacob, moved with his brothers to Egypt. With the exception of the Bible, which gives the data just quoted, and the Qur'an which refers to the move to Egypt, but does not give any indication as to the dates involved, we do not possess any other document which is able to illuminate us on this point.

Present-day commentators, ranging from P. Montet to Daniel Rops, think that, in all probability, the arrival of Joseph and his brothers coincided with the movement of the Hyksos towards Egypt in the Seventeenth century B.C. and that a Hyksos sovereign probably received them hospitably at Avaris in the Nile Delta.

There can be no doubt that this guess is in obvious contradiction to what is contained in the Bible (Kings I, 6, 1) which puts the Exodus from Egypt at 480 years before the construction of Solomon's Temple (circa 971 B.C.). This estimation would therefore put the Exodus at roughly 1450 B.C. and would consequently situate the entry into Egypt at circa 1880-1850 B.C. This is precisely the time, however, that Abraham is supposed to have lived, and other data contained in the Bible tell us that there were 250 years separating him from Joseph. This passage from Kings I in the Bible is therefore unacceptable from a chronological point of view.[84] We shall see how the theory put forward here has only this objection, taken from Kings I, to be levelled against it. The very obvious inaccuracy of these chronological data effectively deprives this objection of any value.

Aside from the Holy Scriptures, the traces left by the Hebrews of their stay in Egypt are very faint. There are however several hieroglyphic documents which refer to the existence in Egypt of a category of workers called the '*Apiru*, *Hapiru* or *Habiru*, who have been identified (rightly or wrongly) with the Hebrews. In this category were construction workers, agricultural labourers, harvesters, etc. But where did they come from? It is very difficult to find an answer to this. Father de Vaux has written the following about them:

"They are not members of the local population, they do not identify themselves with a class in society, they do not all share the same occupation or status."

Under Tuthmosis III, they are referred to in a papyrus as 'workers in the stables'. It is known how Amenophis II, in the Fifteenth century B.C., brought in 3,600 of these people as prisoners from Canaan, because, as Father de Vaux notes, they constituted a considerable percentage of the Syrio-Palestinian population. Under Sethos I, in circa 1300 B.C., the '*Apiru* created considerable disturbances in the Beth-Shean region of Canaan, and under Ramesses II some of them were employed in the quarries or for transporting piles used in the works of the Pharaoh (e.g. the Great Pylon of Ramesses Miamon). We know from the Bible that the Hebrews, under Ramesses II,

were to build the northern capital, the City of Ramesses. In Egyptian writings the '*Apiru* are mentioned once again in the Twelfth century B.C. and for the last time under Ramesses III.

The '*Apiru* are not just mentioned in Egypt however, so did the term therefore apply solely to the Hebrews? It is perhaps wise to recall that the word could initially have been used to signify 'forced labourers', without regard to their origins, and that it subsequently became an adjective indicating a person's profession. We might perhaps draw an analogy with the word 'suisse' (Swiss) which has several different meanings in French. It can mean an inhabitant of Switzerland, a mercenary soldier of the old French monarchy who was of Swiss extraction, a Vatican guard, or an employee of a Christian church . . . However, this may be, under Ramesses II, the Hebrews (according to the Bible) or the '*Apiru* (according to the hieroglyphic texts) took part in the great works ordered by the Pharaoh, which were indeed 'forced labour'. There can be no doubt that Ramesses II was the Jews' oppressor: the cities of Ramesses and Pithom, mentioned in Exodus, are situated at the eastern part of the Nile Delta. Today's Tanis and Qantir, which are roughly 15 miles apart, are in the same region as these two cities. The northern capital constructed by Ramesses II was situated there. Ramesses II is the Pharaoh of the oppression.

Moses was to be born in this environment. The circumstances pertaining to his rescue from the waters of the river have already been outlined above. He has an Egyptian name: P. Montet has clearly shown in his book *Egypt and the Bible* (L'Egypte et la Bible)[85] that the names Mesw or Mesy are on the list of personal names in the dictionary of the hieroglyphic language by Ranke. *Musa* is the transliteration used in the Qur'an.

The Plagues of Egypt

Under this title the Bible refers to ten punishments inflicted by God, and provides many details concerning each of these 'plagues'. Many have supernatural dimensions or characteristics. The Qur'an only lists five plagues, which, for the most part, are merely an exaggeration of natural phenomena: flooding, locusts, lice, frogs and blood.

The rapid multiplication of locusts and frogs is described in the Bible. It speaks of river water changed to blood which floods all the land (sic); the Qur'an refers to blood, but without giving any complementary details. It is possible to invent all kinds of hypotheses on the subject of this reference to blood.

The other plagues described in the Bible (gnats, swarms of flies, boils, hail, darkness, death of the first-born and of cattle) have various origins, as was the case of the Flood, and are constituted by the juxtaposition of passages from many different sources.

The Route Taken by the Exodus

No indication of this is given in the Qur'an, whereas the Bible refers to it in great detail. Father de Vaux and P. Montet have both reopened studies into it. The starting-point was probably the Tanis-Qantir region, but no traces have been found of the rest of the route taken which could

confirm the Biblical narration; nor is it possible to say at exactly what point the waters parted to allow the passage of Moses and his followers.

The Miraculous Parting of the Waters

Some commentators have imagined a tide-race, due perhaps to astronomic causes or seismic conditions connected to the distant eruption of a volcano. The Hebrews could have taken advantage of the receding sea, and the Egyptians, following in hot pursuit, could have been wiped out by the returning tide. All this is pure hypothesis however.

2. The Point Occupied by the Exodus in the History of the Pharaohs

It is possible to arrive at much more positive evidence in the case of the point the Exodus occupies in time.

For a very long time Merneptah, the successor to Ramesses II, was held to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Maspero, the famous Egyptologist of the beginning of this century did, after all, write in his *Visitor's Guide to the Cairo Museum* (Guide du visiteur du Musée du Caire), 1900, that Merneptah "was probably, according to the Alexandrian tradition, the Pharaoh of the Exodus who is said to have perished in the Red Sea." I have been unable to find the documents on which Maspero based this assertion, but the eminence of this commentator requires us to attach the greatest importance to what he claims.

Apart from P. Montet, there are very few Egyptologists or specialists in Biblical exegesis who have researched into the arguments for or against this hypothesis. In the last few decades however, there has been a spate of different hypotheses which seem to have as their sole purpose the justification of an agreement with one single detail in the Scriptural narrations, although the inventors of these hypotheses do not bother with the other aspects of the Scriptures. Thus it is possible for a hypothesis to suddenly appear which seems to agree with one aspect of a narration, although its inventor has not taken the trouble to compare it with all the other data contained in the Scriptures (and consequently not just with the Bible), plus all the data provided by history, archaeology, etc.

One of the strangest hypotheses yet to come to light is by J. de Miceli (1960) who claims to have pinpointed the date of the Exodus to within one day, i.e. the 9th of April, 1495 B.C. He relies for his information entirely on calculations made from calendars and claims that Tuthmosis II was reigning in Egypt at that time, and was therefore the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The confirmation of the hypothesis is supposed to reside in the fact that lesions of the skin are to be observed on the mummy of Tuthmosis II. This commentator informs us (without explaining why) that they are due to leprosy, and that one of the plagues of Egypt described in the Bible consisted in skin boils. This staggering construction takes no account of the other facts contained in the Biblical narration, especially the Bible's mention of the City of Ramesses which rules out any hypothesis dating the Exodus before a 'Ramesses' had reigned.

As to the skin lesions of Tuthmosis II, these do not swing the argument in favour of the theory which designates this King of Egypt as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. This is because his son, Tuthmosis III, and his grandson Amenophis II also show signs of skin tumors[86], so that some commentators have suggested the hypothesis of a disease which ran in the family. The Tuthmosis II theory is not therefore tenable.

The same is true for Daniel-Rops's theory in his book. *The People of the Bible* (Le Peuple de la Bible)[87]. He ascribes the role of the Pharaoh of the Exodus to Amenophis II. It does not seem to be any better-founded than the preceding hypothesis. Using the pretext that Amenophis II's father (Tuthmosis III) was very nationalistic, Daniel-Rops proclaims Amenophis II the persecutor of the Hebrews, while his step-mother, the famous Queen Hatshepsut, is cast in the role of the person who took Moses in (although we never discover why).

Father de Vaux's theory, that it was Ramesses II, rests on slightly more solid foundations. He expands on them in his book, *The Ancient History of Israel* (Histoire ancienne d'Israël)[88]. Even if his theory does not agree with the Biblical narration on every point, at least it has the advantage of putting forward one very important piece of evidence: the construction of the cities of Ramesses and Pithom built under Ramesses II referred to in the Biblical text. It is not possible therefore to maintain that the Exodus took place *before* the accession of Ramesses II. This is situated in the year 1301 B.C., according to Drioton and Vandier's chronology, and in 1290 B.C. according to Rowton's. The two other hypotheses outlined above are untenable because of the following imperative fact: Ramesses II is the Pharaoh of the oppression referred to in the Bible.

Father de Vaux considers the Exodus to have taken place during the first half or towards the middle of Ramesses II's reign.

Thus his dating of this event is imprecise: he suggests this period to allow Moses and his followers time, as it were, to settle in Canaan, and Ramesses II's successor, Pharaoh Merneptah who is said to have pacified the frontiers after his father's death, to bring the Children of Israel into line, as depicted on a stele of the Fifth year of his reign.

Two arguments may be levelled at this theory:

a) The Bible shows (Exodus 2, 23) that the King of Egypt died during the period when Moses was in Midian. This King of Egypt is described in the Book of Exodus as the King who made the Hebrews build the cities of Ramesses and Pithom by forced labour. This King was Ramesses II. The Exodus could only have taken place under the latter's successor. Father de Vaux claims however to doubt the Biblical sources of verse 23, chapter 2 of Exodus.

b) What is more astounding is that Father de Vaux, as director of the Biblical School of Jerusalem, does not refer in his theory of the Exodus to two essential passages in the Bible, both of which bear witness to the fact that the King died during the pursuit of the fleeing Hebrews. This detail makes it impossible for the Exodus to have taken place at any other time than at the end of a reign.

It must be repeated that there can be little doubt that the Pharaoh lost his life as a result of it. Chapters 13 and 14 of Exodus are quite specific on this point: "So he made ready his chariot and

took his army with him . . ." (Exodus 14,6). (Pharaoh king of Egypt) "pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly" (Exodus 14,8) . . . "The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained." (Exodus 14,28 and 29). In addition to these verses, Psalm 136 confirms Pharaoh's death and refers to Yahweh who "overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Sea of Rushes" (Psalms 136,15).

Thus, *during Moses's lifetime, one Pharaoh died when Moses was in Midian and another during the Exodus*. There were not one, but two Pharaohs at the time of Moses: one during the oppression and the other during the Exodus from Egypt. The theory of a single Pharaoh (Ramesses II) put forward by Father de Vaux is unsatisfactory because it does not account for everything. The following observations are further arguments against his theory.

3. Rameses II, Pharaoh of the Oppression Merneptah, Pharaoh of the Exodus

P. Montet has very discerningly resumed the original Alexandrian[89] tradition mentioned by Maspero. It is found much later in the Islamic tradition as well as in the classic Christian tradition.[90] This theory is set out in Montet's book *Egypt and the Bible* (L'Egypte et le Bible)[91] and is supported by additional arguments, based in particular on the narrative contained in the Qur'an, to which the famous archaeologist did not refer. Before examining them however, we shall first return to the Bible.

The Book of Exodus contains a reference to the word 'Ramesses' although the Pharaoh's name is not mentioned. In the Bible 'Ramesses' is the name of one of the cities built by the forced labour of the Hebrews. Today we know that these cities form part of the Tanis-Qantir region, in the eastern Nile Delta. In the area where Ramesses II built his northern capital, there were other constructions prior to his, but it was Ramesses II who made it into an important site, as the archeological excavations undertaken in the last few decades have amply shown. To build it, he used the labour of the enslaved Hebrews.

When one reads the word 'Ramesses' in the Bible today, one is not particularly struck by it: the word has become very common to us since Champollion discovered the key to hieroglyphics 150 years ago, by examining the characters that expressed this very word. We are therefore used to reading and pronouncing it today and know what it means. One has to remember however that the meaning of hieroglyphics had been lost in circa the Third century B.C. and that Ramesses' name had hardly been preserved anywhere except in the Bible and a few books written in Greek and Latin which had deformed it to a lesser or greater extent. It is for this reason that Tacitus in his *Annals* talks of 'Rhamsis'. The Bible had however preserved the name intact: it is referred to four times in the Pentateuch or Torah (Genesis 47,11; Exodus 1,11 and 12,37. Numbers 33,3 and 33,5).

The Hebrew word for 'Ramesses' is written in two ways in the Bible: 'Râ(e) mss' or 'Rââmss'[92]. In the Greek version of the Bible, called the Septuagint, it is 'Râmessê'. In the Latin version (Vulgate) it is written 'Ramesses'. In the Clementine version of the Bible in French

(1st edition, 1621) the word is the same, 'Ramesses'. The French edition was in circulation at the time of Champollion's work in this field. *In his Summary of the Hièrogllyphic System of the Ancient Egyptians* (Precis du système hiéroglyphique des anciens Egyptiens) (2nd edition, 1828, page 276), Champollion alludes to the Biblical spelling of the word.

Thus the Bible had miraculously preserved Ramesses's name in its Hebrew, Greek and Latin versions.[93]

The preceding data alone are enough to establish the following:

a) There can be no question of the Exodus before a 'Ramesses' had come to the throne in Egypt (11 Kings of Egypt had this name).

b) Moses was born during the reign of the Pharaoh who built the cities of Ramesses and Pithom, i.e. Ramesses II.

c) When Moses was in Midian, the reigning Pharaoh (i.e. Ramesses II) died. The continuation of Moses's story took place during the reign of Ramesses II's successor, Merneptah.

What is more, the Bible adds other highly important data which help to situate the Exodus in the history of the Pharaohs. It is the statement that Moses was eighty years old when, under God's orders, he tried to persuade Pharaoh to free his brothers: "Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh." (Exodus 7,7). Elsewhere however, the Bible tells us (Exodus 2,23) that the Pharaoh reigning at the time of the birth of Moses died when the latter was in Midian, although the Biblical narration continues without mentioning any change in the sovereign's name. These two passages in the Bible imply that the total number of years spanning the reigns of the two Pharaohs ruling at the time when Moses was living in Egypt must have been eighty years at least.

It is known that Ramesses II reigned for 67 years (1301-1235 B.C. according to Drioton and Vandier's chronology, 1290-1224 B.C. according to Rowton). For Merneptah, his successor, the Egyptologists are unable, however, to provide the exact dates of his reign. Nevertheless, it lasted for at least ten years because, as Father de Vaux points out, documents bear witness to the tenth year of his reign. Drioton and Vandier give two possibilities for Merneptah: either a ten-year reign, 1234-1224 B.C., or a twenty-year reign 1224-1204 B.C. Egyptologists have no precise indications whatsoever on how Merneptah's reign came to an end: all that can be said is that after his death, Egypt went through a period of serious internal upheavals lasting nearly 25 years.

Even though the chronological data on these reigns are not very precise, there was no other period during the New Kingdom concordant with the Biblical narration when two successive reigns (apart from Ramesses II-Merneptah) amounted to or surpassed eighty years. The Biblical data concerning Moses's age when he undertook the liberation of his brothers can only come from a time during the successive reigns of Ramesses II and Merneptah[94]. All the evidence points towards the fact that Moses was born at the beginning of Ramesses II's reign, was living in Midian when Ramesses II died after a sixty-seven year reign, and subsequently became the spokesman for the cause of the Hebrews living in Egypt to Merneptah, Ramesses II's son and successor. This episode may have happened in the second half of Merneptah's reign, assuming he

reigned twenty years or nearly twenty years. Rowton believes the supposition to be quite feasible. Moses would then have led the Exodus at the end of Merneptah's reign. It could hardly have been otherwise because both the Bible and the Qur'an tell us that Pharaoh perished during the pursuit of the Hebrews leaving the country.

This plan agrees perfectly with the account contained in the Scriptures of Moses's infancy and of the way he was taken into the Pharaoh's family. It is a known fact that Ramesses II was very old when he died: it is said that he was ninety to a hundred years old. According to this theory, he would have been twentythree to thirty-three years old at the beginning of his reign which lasted sixty-seven years. He could have been married at that age and there is nothing to contradict the discovery of Moses by 'a member of Pharaoh's household' (according to the Qur'an), or the fact that Pharaoh's wife asked him if he would keep the newly-born child she had found on the bank of the Nile. The Bible claims that the child was found by Pharaoh's daughter. In view of Ramesses II's age at the beginning of his reign it would have been perfectly possible for him to have had a daughter old enough to discover the abandoned child. The Qur'anic and Biblical narrations do not contradict each other in any way on this point.

The theory given here is in absolute agreement with the Qur'an and is moreover at odds with only one single statement in the Bible which occurs (as we have seen) in Kings I 6,1 (N.B. this book is not included in the Torah). This passage is the subject of much debate and Father de Vaux rejects the historical data contained in this part of the Old Testament, which dates the Exodus in relation to the construction of Solomon's temple. The fact that it is subject to doubt makes it impossible to retain it as a conclusive argument against the theory outlined here.

The Problem of the Stele Dating from the Fifth Year of Merneptah's Reign

In the text of the famous stele dating from the fifth year of Merneptah's reign critics think they have found an objection to the theory set out here, in which the pursuit of the Jews constituted the last act of his reign.

The stele is of great interest because it represents the only known document in hieroglyphics which contains the word 'Israel'.^[95] The inscription which dates from the first part of Merneptah's reign was discovered in Thebes in the Pharaoh's Funeral Temple. It refers to a series of victories he won over Egypt's neighbouring states, in particular a victory mentioned at the end of the document over a "devastated Israel which has no more seed . . ." From this fact it has been held that the existence of the word 'Israel' implied that the Jews must already have settled in Canaan by the fifth year of Merneptah's reign, and that in consequence, the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt had already taken place.

This objection does not seem tenable because it implies that there could have been no Jews living in Canaan all the while there were Jews in Egypt-a proposition it is impossible to accept. Father de Vaux however, in spite of the fact that he is a supporter of the theory which makes Ramesses II the Pharaoh of the Exodus, notes ^[96] the following about the settling of the Jews in Canaan: "In the South, the time when communities related to the Israelites settled in the Kadesh region is

unclear and dates from before the Exodus." He therefore allows for the possibility that certain groups may have left Egypt at a time different from that of Moses and his followers. The '*Apiru* or *Habiru* who have sometimes been identified with the Israelites were already in Syria-Palestine long before Ramesses II and the Exodus: we have documentary evidence which proves that Amenophis II brought back 8,600 prisoners to work as forced labourers in Egypt. Others were to be found in Canaan under Sethos I where they caused unrest in the Beth-Shean region: P. Montet reminds us of this in his book *Egypt and the Bible* (L'Egypte et la Bible). It is quite plausible to suppose therefore that Merneptah was obliged to deal severely with these rebellious elements on his borders while inside them were those who were later to rally around Moses to flee the country. The existence of the stele dating from the fifth year of Merneptah's reign does not in any way detract from the present theory.

Moreover, *the fact that the word 'Israel' figures in the history of the Jewish people is totally unconnected with the notion that Moses and his followers settled in Canaan.* The origin of the word is as follows:

According to Genesis (32,29), Israel is the second name given to Jacob, son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham. The commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible-Old Testament* (Traduction oecuménique de la Bible-Ancien Testament), 1975, think that its meaning is probably that 'God shows Himself in His Strength'. Since it has been given to a single man, it is not surprising that it was given to a community or group of people in memory of a distinguished ancestor.

The name 'Israel', therefore appeared well before Moses: several hundred years before to be exact. It is not surprising consequently to see it cited in a stele from the reign of the Pharaoh Merneptah. The fact that it is cited does not at all constitute an argument in favour of a theory which dates the Exodus before the fifth year of Merneptah's reign.

What it does do is refer to a group which it calls 'Israel', but Merneptah's stele cannot be alluding to a politically established collectivity because the inscription dates from the end of the Thirteenth century B.C. and the Kingdom of Israel was not formed until the Tenth century B.C. It must therefore refer to a human community of more modest proportions.[97]

Nowadays, we know that the entry of 'Israel' into history was preceded by a long formative period of eight or nine centuries. This period was distinguished by the settling of many semi-Nomadic groups, especially the Amorites and the Arameans all over the region. In the same period, Patriarchs began to appear in their communities among whom were Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-Israel. The second name of this last Patriarch was used to designate the original group, the nucleus of a future political entity which was to appear long after Merneptah's reign, since the Kingdom of Israel lasted from 931 or 930 to 721 B.C.

4. The Description Contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Pharaoh's Death During the Exodus.

This event marks a very important point in the narrations contained in the Bible and the Qur'an. It stands forth very clearly in the texts. It is referred to in the Bible, not only in the Pentateuch or Torah, but also in the Psalms: the references have already been given.

It is very strange to find that Christian commentators have completely ignored it. Thus, Father de Vaux maintains the theory that the Exodus from Egypt took place in the first half or the middle of Ramesses II's reign. His theory takes no account of the fact that the Pharaoh perished during the Exodus, a fact which should make all hypotheses place the event at the end of a reign. In his *Ancient History of Israel* (Histoire ancienne d'Israël), the Head of the Biblical School of Jerusalem does not seem to be at all troubled by the contradiction between the theory he maintains and the data contained in the two Books of the Bible: the Torah and Psalms.

In his book, *Egypt and the Bible* (L'Egypte et la Bible), P. Montet places the Exodus during Merneptah's reign, but says nothing about the death of the Pharaoh who was at the head of the army following the fleeing Hebrews.

This highly surprising attitude contrasts with the Jews' outlook: Psalm 136, verse 15 gives thanks to God who "overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Sea of Rushes" and is often recited in their liturgy. They know of the agreement between this verse and the passage in Exodus (14,28-29): "The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained." There is no shadow of a doubt for them that the Pharaoh and his troupes were wiped out. These same texts are present in Christian Bibles.

Christian commentators quite deliberately, and in contradiction to all the evidence, brush aside the Pharaoh's death. What is more however, some of them mention the reference made to it in the Qur'an and encourage their readers to make very strange comparisons. In the translation of the Bible directed by the Biblical School of Jerusalem[98] we find the following commentary on the Pharaoh's death by Father Couroyer.

"The Koran refers to this (Pharaoh's death) (sura 10, verses 90-92), and popular tradition has it that the Pharaoh who was drowned with his army (an event which is not mentioned in the Holy Text[99]) lives beneath the ocean where he rules over the men of the sea, i.e. the seals".

It is obvious that the uninformed reader of the Qur'an is bound to establish a connection between a statement in it which-for the commentator-contradicts the Biblical text and this absurd legend which comes from a so-called popular tradition mentioned in the commentary after the reference to the Qur'an.

The real meaning of the statement in the Qur'an on this has nothing to do with what this commentator suggests: verses 90 to 92, sura 10 inform us that the Children of Israel crossed the sea while the Pharaoh and his troops were pursuing them and that it was only when the Pharaoh was about to be drowned that he cried: "I believe there is no God except the God in which the Children of Israel believe. I am of those who submit themselves to Him." God replied: "What? Now! Thou hast rebelled and caused depravity. This day We save thee in thy body so that thou mayest be a Sign for those who will come after thee."

This is all that the sura contains on the Pharaoh's death. There is no question of the phantasms recorded by the Biblical commentator either here or anywhere else in the Qur'an. The text of the Qur'an merely states very clearly that the Pharaoh's body will be saved: that is the important piece of information.

When the Qur'an was transmitted to man by the Prophet, the bodies of all the Pharaohs who are today considered (rightly or wrongly) to have something to do with the Exodus were in their tombs of the Necropolis of Thebes, on the opposite side of the Nile from Luxor. At the time however, absolutely nothing was known of this fact, and it was not until the end of the Nineteenth century that they were discovered there. As the Qur'an states, the body of the Pharaoh of the Exodus was in fact rescued: whichever of the Pharaohs it was, visitors may see him in the Royal Mummies Room- of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. The truth is therefore very different from the ludicrous legend that Father Couroyer has attached to the Qur'an.

5. Pharaoh Merneptah's Mummy

The mummified body of Merneptah, son of Ramesses II and Pharaoh of the Exodus-all the evidence points to this-was discovered by Loret in 1898 at Thebes in the Kings' Valley whence it was transported to Cairo. Elliot Smith removed its wrappings on the 8th of July, 1907: he gives a detailed description of this operation and the examination of the body in his book *The Royal Mummies* (1912). At that time the mummy was in a satisfactory state of preservation, in spite of deterioration in several parts. Since then, the mummy has been on show to visitors at the Cairo Museum, with his head and neck uncovered and the rest of body concealed under a cloth. It is so well hidden indeed, that until very recently, the only general photographs of the mummy that the Museum possessed were those taken by E. Smith in 1912.

In June 1975, the Egyptian high authorities very kindly allowed me to examine the parts of the Pharaoh's body that had been covered until then. They also allowed me to take photographs. When the mummy's present state was compared to the condition it was in over sixty years ago, it was abundantly clear that it had deteriorated and fragments had disappeared. The mummified tissues had suffered greatly, at the hand of man in some places and through the passage of time in others.

This natural deterioration is easily explained by the changes in the conditions of conservation from the time in the late Nineteenth century when it was discovered. Its discovery took place in the tomb of the Necropolis of Thebes where the mummy had lain for over three thousand years. Today, the mummy is displayed in a simple glass case which does not afford hermetic insulation from the outside, nor does it offer protection from pollution by micro-organisms. The mummy is exposed to fluctuations in temperature and seasonal changes in humidity: it is very far from the conditions which enabled it to remain protected from any source of deterioration for approximately three thousand years. It has lost the protection afforded by its wrappings and the advantage of remaining in the closed environment of the tomb where the temperature was more constant and the air less humid than it is in Cairo at certain times of the year. Of course, while it was in the Necropolis itself, the mummy had to withstand the visits of grave plunderers (probably very early on) and rodents: they caused a certain amount of damage, but the conditions

were nevertheless (it seems) much more favourable for it to stand the test of time than they are today.

At my suggestion, special investigations were made during this examination of the mummy in June 1975. An excellent radiographic study was made by Doctors El Meligy and Ramsiys, and the examination of the interior of the thorax, through a gap in the thoracic wall, was carried out by Doctor Mustapha Manialawiy in addition to an investigation of the abdomen. This was the first example of endoscopy being applied to a mummy. This technique enabled us to see and photograph some very important details inside the body. Professor Ceccaldi performed a general medico-legal study which will be completed by an examination under the microscope of some small fragments that spontaneously fell from the mummy's body: this examination will be carried out by Professor Mignot and Doctor Durigon. I regret to say that definitive pronouncements cannot be made by the time this book goes to print.[100]

What may already be derived from this examination is the discovery of multiple lesions of the bones with broad lacunae, some of which may have been mortal-although it is not yet possible to ascertain whether some of them occurred before or after the Pharaoh's death. He most probably died either from drowning, according to the Scriptural narrations, or from very violent shocks preceding the moment when he was drowned-or both at once.

The connection of these lesions with the deterioration whose sources have been mentioned above renders the correct preservation of the mummy of the Pharaoh somewhat problematical, unless precautionary and restorative measures are not taken very soon. These measures should ensure that the only concrete evidence which we still possess today concerning the death of the Pharaoh of the Exodus and the rescue of his body, willed by God, does not disappear with the passage of time.

It is always desirable for man to apply himself to the preservation of relics of his history, but here we have something which goes beyond that: it is the material presence of the mummified body of the man who knew Moses, resisted his pleas, pursued him as he took flight, lost his life in the process. His earthly remains were saved by the Will of God from destruction to become a sign to man, as it is written in the Qur'an.[101]

Those who seek among modern data for proof of the veracity of the Holy Scriptures will find a magnificent illustration of the verses of the Qur'an dealing with the Pharaoh's body by visiting the Royal Mummies Room of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo!

Translators' Note:

The results of these medical studies carried out in Cairo, 1976, were read by the author before several French learned societies, including the 'Académie Nationale de Médecine' (National Academy of Medicine), during the first part of 1976. The knowledge of these results led the Egyptian Authorities to take the decision to transport the mummy of Ramesses II to France. Thus it arrived for treatment in Paris on the 26th September 1976.

The Qur'an, Hadith and Modern Science

The Qur'an does not constitute the sole source of doctrine and legislation in Islam. During Muhammad's life and after his death, complementary information of a legislative nature was indeed sought in the study of the words and deeds of the Prophet.

Although writing was used in the transmission of hadith from the very beginning, a lot of this came also from the oral tradition. Those who undertook to assemble them in collections made the kind of enquiries which are always very taxing before recording accounts of past events. They nevertheless had a great regard for accuracy in their arduous task of collecting information. This is illustrated by the fact that for all of the Prophet's sayings, the most venerable collections always bear the names of those responsible for the account, going right back to the person who first collected the information from members of Muhammad's family or his companions.

A very large number of collections of the Prophet's words and deeds thus appeared under the title of Hadiths. The exact meaning of the word is 'utterances', but it is also customary to use it to mean the narration of his deeds.

Some of the collections were made public in the decades following Muhammad's death. Just over two hundred years were to pass before some of the most important collections appeared. The most authentic record of the facts is in the collections of Al Bukhari and Muslim, which date from over two hundred years after Muhammad and which provide a wider trustworthy account. In recent years, a bilingual Arabic/English edition has been provided by Doctor Muhammed Muhsin Khan, of the Islamic University of Madina.[102] Al Bukhari's work is generally regarded as the most authentic after the Qur'an and was translated into French (1903-1914) by Houdas and Marcais under the title *Les Traditions Islamiques* (Islamic Traditions). The Hadiths are therefore accessible to those who do not speak Arabic. One must, however, be wary of certain translations made by Europeans, including the French translation, because they contain inaccuracies and untruths which are often more of interpretation than of actual translation. Sometimes, they considerably change the real meaning of a hadith, to such an extent indeed that they attribute a sense to it which it does not contain.

As regards their origins, some of the hadiths and Gospels have one point in common which is that neither of them was compiled by an author who was an eyewitness of the events he describes. Nor were they compiled until some time after the events recorded. The hadiths, like the Gospels, have not all been accepted as authentic. Only a small number of them receive the quasi-unanimous approval of specialists in Muslim Tradition so that, except al-Muwatta, Sahih Muslim and Sahih al-Bukhari, one finds in the same book, hadiths presumed to be authentic side by side with ones which are either dubious, or should be rejected outright.

In contrast to Canonic Gospels which though questioned by some modern scholars but which have never been contested by Christian high authorities, even those hadiths that are most worthy to be considered as authentic have been the subject of criticism. Very early in the history of

Islam, masters in Islamic thought exercised a thorough criticism of the hadiths, although the basic book (The Qur'an) remained the book of reference and was not to be questioned.

I thought it of interest to delve into the literature of the hadiths to find out how Muhammad is said to have expressed himself, outside the context of written Revelation, on subjects that were to be explained by scientific progress in following centuries. Although Sahih Muslim is also an authentic collection, in this study I have strictly limited myself to the texts of the hadiths which are generally considered to be the most authentic, i.e. those of Al Bukhari. I have always tried to bear in mind the fact that these texts were compiled by men according to data received from a tradition which was partially oral and that they record certain facts with a greater or lesser degree of accuracy, depending on the individual errors made by those who transmitted the narrations. These texts are different from other hadiths which were transmitted by a very large number of people and are unquestionably authentic.[103]

I have compared the findings made during an examination of the hadiths with those already set out in the section on the Qur'an and modern science. The results of this comparison speak for themselves. The difference is in fact quite staggering between the accuracy of the data contained in the Qur'an, when compared with modern scientific knowledge, and the highly questionable character of certain statements in the hadiths on subjects whose tenor is essentially scientific. These are the only hadiths to have been dealt with in this study.

Hadiths which have as their subject the interpretation of certain verses of the Qur'an sometimes lead to commentaries which are hardly acceptable today.

We have already seen the great significance of one verse (sura 36, verse 36) dealing with the Sun which "runs its course to a settled place". Here is the interpretation given of it in a hadith: "At sunset, the sun . . . prostrates itself underneath the Throne, and takes permission to rise again, and it is permitted and then (a time will come when) it will be about to prostrate itself . . . it will ask permission to go on its course . . . it will be ordered to return whence it has come and so it will rise in the West . . ." (Sahih Al Bukhari). The original text (The Book of the Beginning of the Creation, Vol. IV page 283, part 54, chapter IV, number 421) is obscure and difficult to translate. This passage nevertheless contains an allegory which implies the notion of a course the Sun runs in relation to the Earth: science has shown the contrary to be the case. The authenticity of this hadith is doubtful (*Zanni*).

Another passage from the same work (The Book of the Beginning of the Creation, vol. IV page 283, part 54, chapter 6, number 430) estimates the initial stages in the development of the embryo very strangely in time: a forty-day period for the grouping of the elements which are to constitute the human being, another forty days during which the embryo is represented as 'something which clings', and a third forty-day period when the embryo is designated by the term 'chewed flesh'. Once the angels have intervened to define what this individual's future is to be, a soul is breathed into him. This description of embryonic evolution does not agree with modern data.

Whereas the Qur'an gives absolutely no practical advice on the remedial arts, except for a single comment (sura 16, verse 69) on the possibility of using honey as a therapeutic aid (without

indicating the illness involved), the hadiths devote a great deal of space to these subjects. A whole section of Al Bukhari's collection (part 76) is concerned with medicine. In the French translation by Houdas and Marcais it goes from page 62 to 91 of volume 4, and in Doctor Muhammad Muhsin Khan's bilingual Arabic/English edition from page 395 to 452, of volume VII. There can be no doubt that these pages contain some hadiths which are conjectural (*Zanni*), but they are interesting as a whole because they provide an outline of the opinions on various medical subjects that it was possible to hold at the time. One might add to them several hadiths inserted in other parts of Al Bukhari's collection which have a medical tenor.

This is how we come to find statements in them on the harms caused by the Evil Eye, witchcraft and the possibility of exorcism; although a certain restriction is imposed on the paid use of the Qur'an for this purpose. There is a hadith which stresses that certain kinds of date may serve as protection against the effects of magic, and magic may be used against poisonous snakebites.

We should not be surprised however to find that at a time when there were limited possibilities for the scientific use of drugs, people were advised to rely on simple practices; natural treatments such as blood-letting, cupping, and cauterization, head-shaving against lice, the use of camel's milk and certain seeds such as black cumin, and plants such as indian Qust. It was also recommended to burn a mat made of palm-tree leaves and put the ash from it into a wound to stop bleeding. In emergencies, all available means that might genuinely be of use had to be employed. It does not *seem-a priori* to be a very good idea, however, to suggest that people drink camel's urine.

It is difficult today to subscribe to certain explanations of subjects related to various illnesses. Among them, the following might be mentioned:

--the origins of a fever. there are four statements bearing witness to the fact that "fever is from the heat of hell" (Al Bukhari, The Book of Medicine, vol. VII, chapter 28, page 416).

--the existence of a remedy for every illness: "No disease God created, but He created its treatment" (Ibid. chapter 1, page 396). This concept is illustrated by the Hadith of the Fly. "If a fly falls into the vessel of any of you, let him dip all of it (into the vessel) and then throw it away, for in one of its wings there is a disease and in the other there is healing (antidote for it). i.e. the treatment for that disease" (Ibid. chapter 15-16, pages 462-463, also The Book of the Beginning of Creation part 54, chapters 15 & 16.)

--abortion provoked by the sight of a snake (which can also blind). This is mentioned in The Book of the Beginning of Creation, Vol. IV(chapter 13 and 14, pages 330 & 334).

--haemorrhages between periods. The Book of Menses (Menstrual Periods) Vol. VI, part 6, pages 490 & 495 contains two hadiths on the cause of haemorrhages between periods (chapters 21 & 28). They refer to two women: in the case of the first, there is a description (undetailed) of the symptoms, with a statement that the haemorrhage comes from a blood vessel; in the second, the woman had experienced haemorrhages between periods for seven years, and the same vascular origin is stated. One might suggest hypotheses as to the real causes of the above, but it is not easy to see what arguments could have been produced at the time to support this diagnosis. This could nevertheless have been quite accurate.

--the statement that diseases are not contagious. Al Bukhari's collection of hadiths refers in several places (chapters 19, 25, 30, 31, 53 and 54, Vol. VII, part 76, of the Book of Medicine) to certain special cases, e.g. leprosy (page 408), plague (pages 418 & 422), camel's scabies (page 447), and also provides general statements. The latter are however placed side by side with glaringly contradictory remarks: it is recommended, for example, not to go to areas where there is plague, and to stay away from lepers.

Consequently, it is possible to conclude that certain hadiths exist which are scientifically unacceptable. There is a doubt surrounding their authenticity. The purpose of reference to them lies solely in the comparison that they occasion with the verses of the Qur'an mentioned above: these do not contain a single inaccurate statement. This observation clearly has considerable importance.

One must indeed remember that at the Prophet's death, the teachings that were received from this fell into two groups:

--firstly, a large number of Believers knew the Qur'an by heart because, like the Prophet, they had recited it many, many times; transcriptions of the text of the Qur'an already existed moreover, which were made at the time of the Prophet and even before the Hegira[104].

-secondly, the members of his following who were closest to him and the Believers who had witnessed his words and deeds had remembered them and relied on them for support, in addition to the Qur'an, when defining a nascent doctrine and legislation.

In the years that were to follow the Prophet's death, texts were to be compiled which recorded the two groups of teachings he had left. The first gathering of hadiths was performed roughly forty years after the Hegira, but a first collection of Qur'anic texts had been made beforehand under Caliph Abu Bakr, and in particular Caliph Uthman, the second of whom published a definitive text during his Caliphate, i.e. between the twelfth and twenty-fourth years following Muhammad's death.

What must be heavily stressed is the disparity between these two groups of texts, both from a literary point of view and as regards their contents. It would indeed be unthinkable to compare the style of the Qur'an with that of the hadiths. What is more, when the contents of the two texts are compared in the light of modern scientific data, one is struck by the oppositions between them. I hope I have succeeded in showing what follows:

--on the one hand, statements in the Qur'an which often appear to be commonplace, but which conceal data that science was later to bring to light.

--on the other hand, certain statements in the hadiths which are shown to be in absolute agreement with the ideas of their times but which contain opinions that are deemed scientifically unacceptable today. These occur in an aggregate of statements concerning Islamic doctrine and legislation, whose authenticity is unquestioningly acknowledged.

Finally, it must be pointed out that Muhammad's own attitude was quite different towards the Qur'an from what it was towards his personal sayings. The Qur'an was proclaimed by him to be a divine Revelation. Over a period of twenty years, the Prophet classified its sections with the

greatest of care, as we have seen. The Qur'an represented what had to be written down during his own lifetime and learned by heart to become part of the liturgy of prayers. The hadiths are said, in principle, to provide an account of his deeds and personal reflections, but he left it to others to find an example in them for their own behaviour and to make them public however they liked: he did not give any instructions.

In view of the fact that only a limited number of hadiths may be considered to express the Prophet's thoughts with certainty, the others must contain the thoughts of the men of his time, in particular with regard to the subjects referred to here. When these dubious or inauthentic hadiths are compared to the text of the Qur'an, we can measure the extent to which they differ. This comparison highlights (as if there were still any need to) the striking difference between the writings of this period, which are riddled with scientific inaccurate statements, and the Qur'an, the Book of Written Revelation, that is free from errors of this kind.[105]

General Conclusions

At the end of this study, a fact that stands forth very clearly is that the predominant opinion held in the West on the TExTs of the Holy Scriptures we possess today is hardly very realistic. We have seen the conditions, times and ways in which the elements constituting the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Qur'an were collected and written down: the circumstances attendant upon the birth of the Scriptures for these three Revelations differed widely in each case, a fact which had extremely important consequences concerning the authenticity of the texts and certain aspects of their contents.

The Old Testament represents a vast number of literary works written over a period of roughly nine hundred years. It forms a highly disparate mosaic whose pieces have, in the course of centuries, been changed by man. Some parts were added to what already existed, so that today it is sometimes very difficult indeed to identify where they came from originally.

Through an account of Jesus's words and deeds, the Gospels were intended to make known to men the teachings he wished to leave them on completion of his earthly mission. Unfortunately, the authors of the Gospels were not eyewitnesses of the data they recorded. They were spokesmen who expressed data that were quite simply the information that had been preserved by the various Judeo-Christian communities on Jesus's public life, passed down by oral traditions or writings which no longer exist today, and which constituted an intermediate stage between the oral tradition and the definitive texts.

This is the light in which the Judeo-Christian Scriptures should be viewed today, and-to be objective-one should abandon the classic concepts held by experts in exegesis.

The inevitable result of the multiplicity of sources is the existence of contradictions and oppositions: many examples have been given of these. The authors of the Gospels had (when

talking of Jesus) the same tendency to magnify certain facts as the poets of French Medieval literature in their narrative poems. The consequence of this was that events were presented from each individual narrator's point of view and the authenticity of the facts reported in many cases proved to be extremely dubious. In view of this, the few statements contained in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures which may have something to do with modern knowledge should always be examined with the circumspection that the questionable nature of their authenticity demands.

Contradictions, improbabilities and incompatibilities with modern scientific data may be easily explained in terms of what has just been said above. Christians are nevertheless very surprised when they realize this, so great have been the continuous and far-reaching efforts made until now by many official commentators to camouflage the very obvious results of modern studies, under cunning dialectical acrobatics orchestrated by apologetic lyricism. A case in point are the genealogies of Jesus given in Matthew and Luke, which were contradictory and scientifically unacceptable. Examples have been provided which reveal this attitude very clearly. John's Gospel has been given special attention because there are very important differences between it and the other three Gospels, especially with regard to the fact that his Gospel does not describe the institution of the Eucharist: this is not generally known.

The Qur'anic Revelation has a history which is fundamentally different from the other two. It spanned a period of some twenty years and, as soon as it was transmitted to Muhammad by Archangel Gabriel, Believers learned it by heart. It was also written down during Muhammad's life. The last recensions of the Qur'an were effected under Caliph Uthman starting some twelve years after the Prophet's death and finishing twenty-four years after it. They had the advantage of being checked by people who already knew the text by heart, for they had learned it at the time of the Revelation itself and had subsequently recited it constantly. Since then, we know that the text has been scrupulously preserved. It does not give rise to any problems of authenticity.

The Qur'an follows on from the two Revelations that preceded it and is not only free from contradictions in its narrations, the sign of the various human manipulations to be found in the Gospels, but provides a quality all of its own for those who examine it objectively and in the light of science i.e. its complete agreement with modern scientific data. What is more, statements are to be found in it (as has been shown) that are connected with science: and yet it is unthinkable that a man of Muhammad's time could have been the author of them. Modern scientific knowledge therefore allows us to understand certain verses of the Qur'an which, until now, it has been impossible to interpret.

The comparison of several Biblical and Qur'anic narrations of the same subject shows the existence of fundamental differences between statements in the former, which are scientifically unacceptable, and declarations in the latter which are in perfect agreement with modern data: this was the case of the Creation and the Flood, for example. An extremely important complement to the Bible was found in the text of the Qur'an on the subject of the history of the Exodus, where the two texts were very much in agreement with archaeological findings, in the dating of the time of Moses. Besides, there are major differences between the Qur'an and the Bible on the other subjects: they serve to disprove all that has been maintained-without a scrap of evidence-concerning the allegation that Muhammad is supposed to have copied the Bible to produce the text of the Qur'an.

When a comparative study is made between the statements connected with science to be found in the collection of hadiths, which are attributed to Muhammad but are often of dubious authenticity (although they reflect the beliefs of the period), and the data of a similar kind in the Qur'an, the disparity becomes so obvious that any notion of a common origin is ruled out.

In view of the level of knowledge in Muhammad's day, it is inconceivable that many of the statements in the Qur'an which are connected with science could have been the work of a man. It is, moreover, perfectly legitimate, not only to regard the Qur'an as the expression of a Revelation, but also to award it a very special place, on account of the guarantee of authenticity it provides and the presence in it of scientific statements which, when studied today, appear as a challenge to explanation in human terms.

Endnotes

1. What is meant by Torah are the first five books of the Bible, in other words the Pentateuch of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).
2. Pub. Ancora, Rome.
3. Pub. Cerf, Paris
4. Pub. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris "Que sais-je?" collection
5. Translator's Note: Published December 1975 by Les Editions du Cerf and Les Bergers et les Mages, Paris
6. So called because God is named Yahweh in this text.
7. So called because God is named Elohim in this text.
8. From the preachers in the Temple at Jerusalem.
9. Paris, 1974 edition, Vol. a, pp. 246-263.
10. We shall see in the next chapter, when confronted with modern scientific data, the extent of the narrative errors committed by authors of the Sacerdotal version on the subject of the antiquity of man on Earth, his situation in time and the course of the Creation. They are obviously errors arising from manipulation of the texts.
11. Pub. w. M. Collins & Sons for the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1952.
12. No. 38, 1974, pp. 95-112)

13. Introduction to Genesis, page 35.
14. Ibid., page 34
15. Pub. Le Centurion, Paris
16. Pub. Le Centurion, 1966, Paris
17. Pub. Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1973
18. Pub. Desclée and Co., Paris.
19. Pub. Editions du Cerf, Paris
20. Pub. Beauchesne, Coll. 'Le Point théologique'. Paris. 1974
21. Pious XII was Pope from 1939 to 1959
22. One could note here that all these writings were later to be classed as Apocrypha, i.e. they had to be concealed by the victorious Church which was born of Paul's success. This Church made obvious excisions in the Gospel literature and retained only the four Canonic Gospels.
23. Pub. Editions du Cerf et Les Bergers et les Mages, Paris.
24. Pub. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1967
25. The three Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke.
26. The fact that it is in contradiction with Luke's Gospel will be dealt with in a separate chapter.
27. The Samaritans' religious code was the Torah or Pentateuch; they lived in the expectation of the Messiah and were faithful to most Jewish observances, but they had built a rival Temple to the one at Jerusalem.
28. It has been thought that the Judeo-Christian community that Matthew belonged to might just as easily have been situated at Alexandria. O. Culmann refers to this hypothesis along with many others.
29. An American film which parodies the life of Jesus.
30. In another part of his Gospel Matthew again refers to this episode but without being precise about the time (16, 1-4). The same is true for Luke (11, 29-32). We shall see later on how in Mark, Jesus is said to have declared that no sign would be given to that generation (Mark 8, 11-12).

31. It is not possible to establish a comparison with John because he does not refer to the institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper prior to the Passion.

32. Words.

33. Nestlé-Aland Pub. United Bible Societies, London, 1971

34. The Gospels sometimes refer to Jesus's 'brothers' and 'sisters' (Matthew 13, 46-60 and 64-68; Mark 6, 1-6; John 7, 3 and 2, 12). The Greek words used, adelphoi and adelphai, indeed signify biological brothers and sisters; they are most probably a defective translation of the original Semitic words which just mean 'kin'. in this instance they were perhaps cousins.

35. A. Tricot, Little Dictionary of the New Testament (Petit Dictionnaire du Nouveau Testament in "La Sainte Bible", Desclée, Pub. Paris)

36. Pub. Desclée, coll. 'Parole et Prière', Paris.

37. Pub. Editions du Seuil, Paris.

38. Although the author assures us that he knows of the existence of these supposed family archives from the Ecclesiastic History by Eusebius Pamphili (about whose respectability much could be said), it is difficult to see why Jesus's family should have two genealogical trees that were necessarily different just because each of the two so-called 'historians' gave a genealogy substantially different from the other concerning the names of those who figure among Jesus's ancestors.

39. 'No other New Testament author can claim that distinction', he notes.

40. It is difficult to see how there could have been!

41. i.e. the eleven Apostles; Judas, the twelfth, was already dead.

42. In fact, for John it was during the Last Supper itself that Jesus delivered the long speech that mentions the Paraclete.

43. Nestlé and Aland. Pub. United Bibles Societies, London, 1971.

44. This manuscript was written in the Fourth or Fifth century A.D. It was discovered in 1812 on Mount Sinai by Agnes S.-Lewis and is so named because the first text had been covered by a later one which, when obliterated, revealed the original.

45. Many translations and commentaries of the Gospel, especially older ones, use the word 'Consoler' to translate this, but it is totally inaccurate.

46. At a certain period of history, hostility to Islam, in whatever shape or form, even coming from declared enemies of the church, was received with the most heartfelt approbation by high

dignitaries of the Catholic Church. Thus Pope Benedict XIV, who is reputed to have been the greatest Pontiff of the Eighteenth century, unhesitatingly sent his blessing to Voltaire. This was in thanks for the dedication to him of the tragedy *Mohammed or Fanaticism* (Mahomet ou le Fanatisme) 1741, a coarse satire that any clever scribbler of bad faith could have written on any subject. In spite of a bad start, the play gained sufficient prestige to be included in the repertoire of the Comédie-Francaise.

47. Lumen Gentium is the title of a document produced by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1966)

48. God.

49. Translators of the Qur'an, even famous ones, have not resisted the secular habit of putting into their translations things that are not really in the Arabic text at all. One can indeed add titles to the text that are not in the original without changing the text itself, but this addition changes the general meaning. R. Blachère, for example, in his well-known translation (Pub. Maisonneuve et Larose, Paris, 1966, page 115) inserts a title that does not figure in the Qur'an: Duties of the Holy War (Obligations de la guerre sainte). This is at the beginning of a passage that is indisputably a call to arms, but does not have the character that has been ascribed to it. After reading this, how can the reader who only has access to the Qur'an via translations fail to think that a Muslim's duty is to wage holy war?

50. Muhammad's departure from Makka to Madina, 622 A.D.

51. Muhammad was totally overwhelmed by these words. We shall return to an interpretation of them, especially with regard to the fact that Muhammad could neither read nor write.

52. In the text: Qur'an which also means 'reading'.

53. The absence of diacritical marks, for example, could make a verb either active or passive and in some instances, masculine or feminine. More often than not however, this was hardly of any great consequence since the context indicated the meaning in many instances.

54. The Biblical description mentioned here is taken from the so-called Sacerdotal version discussed in the first part of this work; the description taken from the so-called Yahvist version has been compressed into the space of a few lines in today's version of the Bible and is too insubstantial to be considered here.

55. 'Sabbath' in Hebrew means 'to rest'.

56. See table on last page of present work for equivalence between Latin and Arabic letters.

57. It is to be noted that while the Bible calls both Sun and Moon 'lights', here, as always in the Qur'an, they are differently named; the first is called 'Light' (*nur*) and the second is compared in this verse to a 'lamp' (*siraj*) producing light'. We shall see later how other epithets are applied to the Sun.

58. Apart from the Qur'an, we often find the number 7 meaning plurality in texts from Muhammad's time, or from the first centuries following him, which record his words (hadiths).

59. This statement that the Creation did not make God at all weary stands out as an obvious reply to the Biblical description, referred to in the first part of the present book, where God is said to have rested on the seventh day from the preceding days' work!

60. As regards the Moon, its gradual separation from the Earth following the deceleration of its rotation is an acknowledged probability.

61. This text completely overshadows the few lines contained in the Yahvist version. The latter is too brief and too vague for the scientist to take account of it.

62. Pub. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1952.

63. I have often heard those who go to great lengths to find a human explanation-and no other-to all the problems raised by the Qur'an Bay the following: "if the Book contains surprising statements on astronomy, it is because the Arabs were very knowledgeable on this subject." In so doing they forget the fact that, in general, science in Islamic countries is very much post-Qur'an, and that the scientific knowledge of this great period would in any case not have been sufficient for a human being to write some of the verses to be found in the Qur'an. This will be shown in the following paragraphs.

64. Here, the sky and a star are used to bear witness to the importance of what is to come in the text.

65. It is known that when a meteorite arrives at the upper layers of the atmosphere, it may produce the luminous phenomenon of a 'shooting star'.

66. Pub. Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore (Pakistan)

67. This verse is followed by an invitation to recognize God's blessings. It forms the subject of the whole of the sura that bears the title 'The Beneficent'.

68. Whenever the pronoun 'We' appears in the verses of the text quoted here, it refers to God.

69. 1. The city of Sanaa, the capital of the Yemen, was inhabited in Muhammad's time. It lies at an altitude of nearly 7,900 feet above sea level.

70. It is secreted by the reproductive glands and contains spermatozoons.

71. We saw in the Introduction to the third part of this book what one was expected to believe about predestination in its application to man himself.

72. One might note in passing, that this last verse is the only one in the Qur'an that refers to the possibility of a remedy for man. Honey can indeed be useful for certain diseases. Nowhere else

in the Qur'an is a reference made to any remedial arts, contrary to what may have been said about this subject.

73. Pub. Flammarion, 1972, Paris.

74. It makes this journey over a period of six months, and comes back to its departure point with a maximum delay of one week.

75. Pub. G. P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1966, Paris,

76. Pub. Club Français du Livre, 1971, Paris.

77. It is estimated that in one cubic centimetre of sperm there are 25 million spermatozoons with, under normal conditions, an ejaculation of several cubic centimetres.

78. God is speaking

79. In another verse (sura 6, verse 98) a place of sojourn is mentioned. It is expressed in a term very similar to the preceding one and would also seem to signify the maternal uterus. Personally, I believe this to be the meaning of the verse, but a detailed interpretation would involve much lengthier explanation which is beyond the scope of this book.

80. Now that certain notions concerning the chronology of ancient times have been established, and the imaginary dates given by the authors of the Sacerdotal text of the Old Testament are no longer credible, those dates have quickly been suppressed in Bibles. In the case of those genealogies that have been preserved, modern commentators of books intended for mass publication fail to draw the readers' attention to the errors they contain.

81. Surely 'seven' here indicates 'many', as it often does in the Semitic languages of the time.

82. We shall later see that the figure has been grossly exaggerated.

83. In Hebrew 'yam souf'.

84. We shall return to this subject later, when we call upon Father de Vaux's help in examining this reference in Kings I.

85. Pub. Delachaux and Niestlé, Neufchatel, 1959.

86. The skin lesions are clearly visible on the mummies of these Pharaohs preserved in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

87. Pub. Desclée de Brouwer, 1970, Paris.

88. Pub. J. Gabalda and Co., 1971, Paris.

89. There can be no doubt that in the Golden Age of the ptolemies, historical documents on Antiquity were preserved at Alexandria, only to be destroyed at the time of the Roman conquest; a loss which is keenly felt today.

90. In the Holy Histories of the early 20th century, as in the History by Abbe H. Lesetre, intended for religious instruction, the Exodus is mentioned as having taken place during Merneptah's reign in Egypt.

91. Pub. Delachaux and Niestlé, Neuchatel, 1959.

92. The letter 'e' figures as the *ayin* in Hebrew.

93. It is strange to note moreover, that in old editions of the Bible, commentators did not understand the meaning of the word at all. In the French edition of the Clementine Bible, 1621, for example, an interpretation of the word 'Ramesses' is given which makes total nonsense: 'Thunder of Vermin' (sic).

94. The period spanning the two reigns Sethos I-Ramesses II, which is said to have lasted roughly eighty years, is out of the question: Sethos I's reign-which was too short for this-does not square with the very long stay in Midian which Moses made as an adult and which took place during the reign of the first of the two Pharaohs he was to know.

95. The word is followed by a generic determinative which leaves no doubt as to the fact that this term signifies a 'human community or group'.

96. In his book *'The Ancient History of Israel'* (Histoire ancienne d'Israël)

97. "The name 'Israel' (in the stele) is accompanied by the generic determinative 'people' instead of the determinative 'country', as is the case for the other proper names in the stele" writes Father B. Couroyer, Professor at the Biblical School of Jerusalem, in his commentary to the translation of the Book of Exodus (Pub. Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1968, page 12).

98. L'Exode (Exodus), 1968, page 73, Pub. Les Editions du Cerf, Paris.

99. There can be no doubt that this commentator is referring to the Bible.

100. November, 1975 for the First French edition.

101. The mummy of Ramesses II, who was another witness to Moses's story, has been the subject of a study comparable to the one carried out on the mummy of Merneptah; the same restoration work is required for it.

102. Pub. Sethi Straw Board Mills (Conversion) Ltd and Taleem-ul-Qur'an Trust, Gujranwala, Cantt. Pakistan. 1st edition 1971, for Sahih Al Bukhari.

103. Muslim specialists designate the first by the word *Zanni* and the second by the word *Qat'i*.

104. The Hegira was in 622, ten years before Muhammad's death.

105. The truth of the hadiths, from a religious point of view, is beyond question. When they deal, however, with earthly affairs there is no difference between the Prophet and other humans. One hadith gives an account of an utterance of the Prophet: "Whenever I command you to do something related to Religion do obey, and if I command you something according to my own opinion (do remember this) I am a human being".

Al Saraksi in his 'Principles' (Al Usul) transmitted this statement as follows: "If I bring something to you on your religion, do act according to it, and if I bring you something related to this world, then you have a better knowledge of your own earthly affairs".

Back cover

In his objective study of the texts, Maurice Bucaille clears' away many preconceived ideas about the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Qur'an. He tries, in this collection of Writings, to separate what belongs to Revelation from what is the product of error or human interpretation. His study sheds new light on the Holy Scriptures. At the end of a gripping account, he places the Believer before a point of cardinal importance: the continuity of a Revelation emanating from the same God, with modes of expression that differ in the course of time. It leads us to meditate upon those factors which, in our day, should spiritually unite rather than divide-Jews, Christians and Muslims.

As a surgeon, Maurice Bucaille has often been in a situation where he was able to examine not only people's bodies, but their souls. This is how he was struck by the existence of Muslim piety and by aspects of Islam which remain unknown to the vast majority of non-Muslims. In his search for explanations which are otherwise difficult to obtain, he learnt Arabic and studied the Qur'an. In it, he was surprised to find statements on natural phenomena whose meaning can only be understood through modern scientific knowledge.

He then turned to the question of the authenticity of the writings that constitute the Holy Scriptures of the monotheistic religions. Finally, in the case of the Bible, he proceeded to a confrontation between these writings and scientific data.

The results of his research into the Judeo-Christian Revelation and the Qur'an are set out in this book.

2ND book or part is (**THE TRUTH ABOUT MUHAMMAD AND JESUS**)

3RD book is or part is (The quran the final evidence they don't want you to know)

Information arranged & organized by MR.Faisal

Top 19 information you can learn in these 2ND & 3RD books & why these are must reads for all

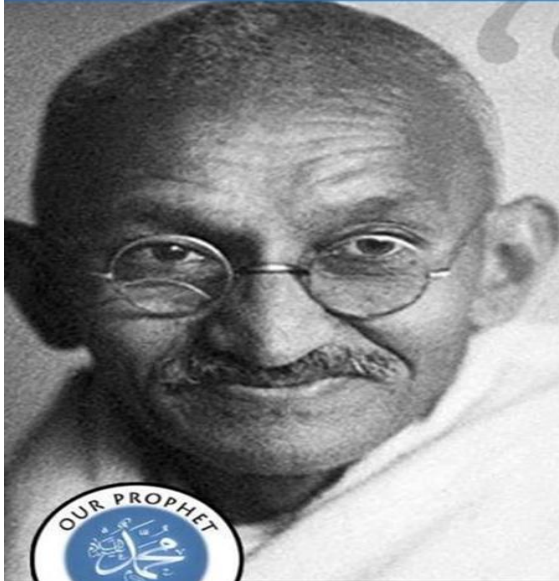
1. Biography of Muhammad by a non Muslim.
2. Biography of Muhammad by a Muslim.
3. What do non Muslim scholars say about Muhammad.
4. Complete valid information about Jesus.
5. Proven facts about the great Jesus.
6. A documentary book on science, Islam, Christianity & Judaism.
7. A research project on Abrahamic religions.
8. Moses, Jesus & Muhammad in Islam & Christianity.
9. Aramaic the true language of Jesus.
10. Similarities & differences of Jesus & Muhammad.
11. God definitions of various religions.
12. Women in various faiths.
13. Islam & terrorism.
14. Is evolution proven by logic & science .
15. Torah, Bible, Quran & science.
16. The similarities & the differences of world's major religions.
17. Proof that Jesus existed.
18. Proof that Muhammad existed.
19. Does God exist?

Message from the author: My intention is not to criticize any one's beliefs. According to my knowledge the information of my book is 100% accurate. I hope any person with an open mind or a truth seeker will love my book. My book is for all kinds of people & I welcome all to read my book. It's okay to agree or disagree with my book. This entire book is not totally written by me. It is based on a research project done by me. The book is as the title goes. The information is arranged & organized by me & all sources of all documents or information is mentioned inside the book. Purpose of my book is to share the knowledge which is available in many sources & I have mentioned them in the book. Hope you enjoy & share my book. *"The greatest creation of god is us, the true race of us the 1 & only us, all of us the mankind simply 1 race of humanity. Love is the only antidote of hate. So, love, peace & God bless for all. knowledge is not only power but it is indeed freedom to speak out the truth of an existence and I will share it to set it free. Thank you for reading my work. God bless planet earth & America"*

1

NON-MUSLIM VIEWS ABOUT MUHAMMAD

PEACE BE UPON HIM



I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind.... I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life.

Mahatma Gandhi

Part 1

THE TRUTH ABOUT MUHAMMAD AND JESUS

1

Thomas Carlyle, struck by this philosophy of life writes “and then also Islam-that we must submit to God; that our whole strength lies in resigned submission to Him, whatsoever he does to us, the thing he sends to us, even if death and worse than death, shall be good, shall be best; we resign ourselves to God.” The same author continues “If this be Islam, says Goethe, do we not all live in Islam?” Carlyle himself answers this question of Goethe and says “Yes, all of us that have any moral life, we all live so. This is yet the highest wisdom that heaven has revealed to our earth.”

Killing innocent human is a major sin in Islam & Islam is against terrorism. Muhammad said no one has the right to burn anything only God has the right to burn someone which is in hell.

Thenceforth were your hearts hardened: They became like a rock and even worse in hardness. For among rocks there are some from which rivers gush forth; others there are which when split asunder send forth water; and others which sink for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unmindful of what ye do. 2:74 al-Baqarah Verse: 74 AL-QURAN.

On the authority of Abu Malik al-Harith bin Asim al-Asharee (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Purity is half of iman (faith). ‘Al-hamdu lillah (praise be to Allah)’ fills the scales, and ‘subhan-Allah (how far is Allah from every imperfection) and ‘Al-hamdulillah (praise be to Allah)’ fill that which is between heaven and earth. And the salah (prayer) is a light, and charity is a proof, and patience is illumination, and the Qur’an is a proof either for you or against you. Every person starts his day as a vendor of his soul, either freeing it or causing its ruin.” It was related by Muslim.

Even Western scholars have repudiated the myth of Muslims coercing others to convert. The great historian De Lacy O’Leary wrote:

“History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims, sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.”[3]

Even in a state of war, Islam enjoins that one deals with the enemy nobly on the battlefield. Islam has drawn a clear line of distinction between the combatants and the non-combatants of the enemy country. As far as the non-combatant population is concerned such as women, children, the old and the infirm, etc., the instructions of the Prophet are as follows: “Do not kill any old person, any child or any woman” [1].

“Do not kill the monks in monasteries” or “Do not kill the people who are sitting in

2 places of worship." [2]

During a war, the Prophet saw the corpse of a woman lying on the ground and observed:

"She was not fighting. How then she came to be killed?" Thus non-combatants are guaranteed security of life even if their state is at war with an Islamic state.

Muhammad's Prophethood: Intellectual Proofs

Table of Contents

1. The Prophet (pbuh) was unlettered. He did not know how to read or write. He lived among a people who were unlettered as well. Therefore one cannot claim that the Qur'an was authored by Muhammad (pbuh)! God, the Exalted, says:

"And you did not recite any Book before it, nor did you write one with your right hand; in that case the liars would have doubted." (29:48)

2. The Arabs were challenged to bring forth something similar to the Qur'an, and they were unable to do so! The beauty, structure and deep meanings of the Qur'an amazed the Arabs. The Qur'an is the everlasting miracle of Muhammad (pbuh). The Messenger of God (pbuh) said:

"The miracles of the Prophets (before Muhammad pbuh) were confined to their times. The miracle I have been given is the Qur'an, which is everlasting; therefore, I hope to have the most followers." (Bukhari 4598)

Even though his people were eloquent and well known for their awesome poetry, God challenged them to produce similar to the Qur'an, but they couldn't. God then challenged them to produce a chapter similar to it, and they couldn't.

God says:

"And if you are in doubt as to what We have sent down to Our slave, then produce a chapter like it, and call upon your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful." (2:23)

God challenges mankind at large to bring forth similar to the Qur'an. God says:

"Say, 'if mankind and the Jinn gathered together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even though they should help one another.'" (17:88)

3. The Prophet pbuh continued preaching and calling people to Islam, even though he faced many hardships and was confronted by his people, who were plotting to kill him. Yet the Prophet pbuh continued preaching, and was patient. If he was an imposter - he would stop preaching and would have feared for his life.

W. Montgomery Watt said:

His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as a leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement - all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems that it solves.

3 Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.... Thus, not merely must we credit Muhammad with essential honesty and integrity of purpose, if we are to understand him at all; if we are to correct the errors we have inherited from the past, we must not forget the conclusive proof is a much stricter requirement than a show of plausibility, and in a matter such as this only to be attained with difficulty.

4. Every person loves the ornaments and beauties of this life, and would be swayed by these things. God, the Exalted, says:

"Beautified for men is the love of desired things –women and children, and stored-up heaps of gold and silver, and pastured horses and cattle and crops. That is the provision of the present life; but it is God with Whom is an excellent abode." (3:14)

Man, by his nature, is keen in acquiring ornaments and beauties of this world. People differ in the method they use to acquire these things. Some would resort to using lawful means to gain these things, while others would resort to using unlawful means to acquire these things.

If this is known (you should know that) Quraish tried to persuade the Prophet (pbuh) to stop calling people to Islam. They told him that they would make him the master of Quraish, marry him to the most beautiful women, and make him the most affluent man amongst them. He responded to these tempting offers, saying:

"By God, if they place the sun in my right hand, and the moon in my left hand to leave this matter, I would not leave it, until God makes it apparent, or I am killed calling people to it." (Ibn Hisham)

Were the Prophet (pbuh) an impostor he would have accepted this offer without hesitation.

Thomas Carlyle, said:

"They called him a prophet, you say? Why, he stood there face to face with them, here, not enshrined in any mystery, visibly clouting his own cloak, cobbling his own shoes, fighting, counseling ordering in the midst of them. They must have seen what kind of a man he was, let him be called what ye like. No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During three and twenty ears of rough, actual trial, I find something of a veritable hero necessary for that of itself."⁴⁰

5. It is well known that subjects and wealth of a kingdom are subjected to the will of the king, and his service. As for Muhammad (pbuh) he knew that this life was a transitory stage.

Ibraheem b. Alqamah said that Abdullah said: 'The Prophet (pbuh) lay down on a straw mat which had marked his side, so I said: 'O Messenger of God! I ransom you with my mother and father! Allow us to put bedding on this mat that you lay on, so your side would not be affected and marked.' The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"My example in this life is like a rider who took rest under the shade of a tree then continued on his journey." (Ibn Majah #4109)

An-Nu'man b. Basheer said:

4 "I saw your Prophet (pbuh) (during a time) when he was not able to even find low quality dates to fill his stomach." (Muslim #2977)

Abu Hurairah said:

"The Messenger of God (pbuh) never filled his stomach for three consecutive days until his death." (Bukhari #5059)

Even though the Arabian Peninsula was under his control, and he was the source of goodness for its people, the Prophet (pbuh) would at some times not find food to suffice him. His wife, A'ishah said that the Prophet (pbuh) bought some food from a Jew (and agreed to pay him at a later time) and he gave him his armor as collateral.' (Bukhari #2088)

This does not mean that he could not obtain what he wanted; for the moneys and wealth would be placed in front of him in his Masjid, and he would not move from his spot, until he distributed it amongst the poor and needy. Among his Companions were those who were wealthy and affluent - they would rush to serve him and would give up the most valuable of things for him. The reason the Prophet (pbuh) renounced the riches of this world, was because he knew the reality of this life. He said:

"The likeness of this world to the Hereafter, is like a person who dipped his finger in the ocean - let him see what would return." (Muslim #2858)

Reverend Bosworth Smith said:

If ever a man ruled by a right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the powers without their supports. He cared not for the dressings of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life.⁴¹

6. Certain incidents would befall the Prophet of God (pbuh) which would need clarification, and he would not be able to do anything because he did not receive revelation regarding it.

During this period (i.e. between the incident and revelation) he would be exhausted. One such incident is the incident of Ifk⁴² wherein the Prophet's wife A'ishah was accused of being treacherous. The Prophet (pbuh) did not receive revelation concerning this incident for one month; during which his enemies talked ill of him, until revelation was revealed and the innocence of A'ishah was declared. Were the Prophet (pbuh) an imposter he would have resolved this incident the minute it came about. God says:

"Nor does he speak out of desire." (53:3)

7. The Prophet (pbuh) did not ask people to adulate him. On the contrary, the Prophet (pbuh) would not be pleased if a person adulated him in any way. Anas said:

"There was no individual more beloved to the Companions than the Messenger of God.' He said: 'If they saw him, they would not stand up for him, because they knew he disliked that.' " (Tirmidhi #2754)

5 Washington Irving, said:

"His military triumphs awakened no pride nor vain glory as they would have done had they been effected by selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manner and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonial of respect was shown to him."

8. Some verses from the Qur'an were revealed in which the Prophet (pbuh) was blamed and admonished, due to some incident or happening; such as:

a. The words of God, the Exalted:

"O Prophet! Why do you forbid (for yourself) that which God has allowed to you, seeking to please your wives? And God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (66:1)

The Prophet (pbuh) abstained from eating honey, due to the behavior of some of his wives. God then admonished him because he forbade upon himself what God deemed lawful.

b. God, the Exalted, says:

"May God forgive you (O Muhammad). Why did you grant them leave (for remaining behind; you should have persisted as regards your order to them to proceed on Jihad) until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light, and you had known the liars?" (9:43)

God admonished the Prophet (pbuh) because he quickly accepted the false excuses of the hypocrites who lagged behind in the Battle of Tabook. He forgave them and accepted their excuses, without verifying them.

c. God, the Exalted, says:

"It is not for a Prophet that he should have prisoners of war (and free them with ransom) until he had made a great slaughter (among his enemies) in the land. You desire the good of this world, but God desires for you the Hereafter. And God is All-Mighty, All-Wise." (8:67)

d. God, the Exalted, says:

"Not for you (O Muhammad, but for God) is the decision; whether He turns in mercy, to (pardon) them or punishes them; verily, they are the wrong-doers." (3:128)

e. God, the Exalted, says:

"The Prophet frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man. And how can you know that he might become pure from sins? Or he might receive admonition, and the admonition might profit him?" (80:1-4)

Abdullah b. Umm Maktoom, who was blind, came to the Prophet (pbuh) while he was preaching to one or some of the Quraish leaders, and the Prophet (pbuh) frowned and turned away - and God admonished him on account of that.

Therefore, were the Prophet (pbuh) an imposter, these verses would not be found in the Qur'an.

Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall said:

One day when the Prophet was in conversation with one of the great men of Qureysh, seeking to persuade him of the truth of Al-Islam, a blind man came and asked him a question concerning the faith. The Prophet was annoyed at the interruption, frowned and turned away from the blind man. In this Surah he is told that a man's importance is not to be judged from his appearance or worldly station.⁴³

9. One of the sure signs of his Prophethood is found in the Chapter of Lahab (chapter 111) in the Qur'an. In it God, the Exalted, condemned Abu Lahab (the Prophet's uncle) to the torment of Hell. This chapter was revealed during the early stages of his Da'wah (call to Islam). Were the Prophet (pbuh) an imposter he would not issue a ruling like this; since his uncle might accept Islam afterwards!

Dr. Gary Miller says:

For example, the Prophet (pbuh) had an uncle by the name of Abu Lahab. This man hated Islam to such an extent that he used to follow the Prophet around in order to discredit him. If Abu Lahab saw the Prophet (pbuh) speaking to a stranger, he would wait until they parted and then would go back to the stranger and ask him, 'What did he tell you? Did he say black? Well, it's white. Did he say 'Morning?' Well, it's night.' He faithfully said the exact opposite of whatever he heard Muhammad (pbuh) say. However, about ten years before Abu Lahab died a little chapter in the Qur'an was revealed to him. It distinctly stated that he would go to the Fire (i.e. Hell). In other words, it affirmed that he would never become a Muslim and would therefore be condemned forever. For ten years all Abu Lahab had to do was say, 'I heard that it has been revealed to Muhammad that I will never change – that I will never become a Muslim and will enter the Hellfire. Well I want to become a Muslim now. How do you like that? What do you think of your divine revelation now?' But he never did that. And yet, that is exactly the kind of behavior one would have expected from him since he always sought to contradict Islam. In essence, Muhammad (pbuh) said: 'You hate me and you want to finish me? Here, say these words, and I am finished. Come on, say them!' But Abu Lahab never said them. Ten years! And in all that time he never accepted Islam or even became sympathetic to the Islamic cause. How could Muhammad possibly have known for sure that Abu Lahab would fulfill the Qur'anic revelation if he (i.e. Muhammad) was not truly the Messenger of Allah? How could he possibly have been so confident as to give someone ten years to discredit his claim of Prophethood? The only answer is that he was Allah's Messenger; for in order to put forth such a risky challenge, one has to be entirely convinced that he has a divine revelation.⁴⁴

10. The Prophet (pbuh) is called: 'Ahmed' in a verse of the Qur'an instead of 'Muhammad'. God, the Exalted, says:

7 "And remember when Eesa, son of Maryam said: 'O Chil-dren of Israel! I am the Messenger of God unto you, con-firming the Torah which came before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmed. But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: 'This is plain magic.' " (61:6)

Were he an imposter, the name 'Ahmed' would not have been mentioned in the Qur'an, since he was known as 'Muhammad' amongst his people.

11. The religion of Islam still exists today and is spreading all over the Globe. Thousands of people embrace Islam and prefer it over all other religions. This happens even though the callers to Islam are not financially backed as expected; and in spite of the efforts of the enemies of Islam to halt the spread of Islam. God, the Exalted, says:

"Verily, We sent down the Reminder (i.e. the Qur'an) and surely, We will guard it from corruption." (15:9)

Thomas Carlyle said:

A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick house! If he does not know and follow truly the proper-ties of mortar, burnt clay and what else he works in, it is no house that he makes, but a rubbish-heap. It will not stand for twelve centuries, to lodge a hundred and eighty millions; it will fall straightway. A man must conform himself to Na-ture's laws, _be_ verily in communion with Nature and the truth of things, or Nature will answer him, No, not at all! Spe-ciosities are specious--ah me!--a Cagliostro, many Cagliostros, prominent world-leaders, do prosper by their quackery, for a day. It is like a forged bank-note; they get it passed out of _their_ worthless hands: others, not they, have to smart for it. Nature bursts up in fire-flames; French Revolutions and such like, proclaiming with terrible veracity that forged notes are forged. But of a Great Man especially, of him I will venture to assert that it is incredible he should have been other than true. It seems to me the primary foundation of him, and of all that can lie in him, this.⁴⁵

The Prophet pbuh preserved the Qur'an, after God had preserved it in the Books, chests of men generation after generation. In-deed memorizing and reciting it, learning and teaching it are among the things Muslims are very keen on doing, for the Prophet pbuh said:

"The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it."
(Bukhari #4639)

Many have tried to add and omit verses from the Qur'an, but they have never been successful; for these mistakes are discov-ered almost immediately.

As for the Sunnah of the Messenger of God (pbuh) which is the second source of legislation in Islam, it has been preserved by trustworthy pious men. They spent their lives gathering these traditions, and scrutinizing them to separate the weak from the authentic; they even clarified which narrations were fabricated. Whoever looks at the books written in the science of Hadeeth will realize this, and that the narrations that are authentic are in fact authentic.

8 **Michael Hart**⁴⁶ says:

Muhammad founded and promulgated one of the world's great religions⁴⁷, and became an immensely effective political leader. Today, thirteen centuries after his death, his influence is still powerful and pervasive.

12. Veracity and truthfulness of his principles and that they are good and suitable for every time and place. The results of the application of Islam are clear and well known, which in turn testify that it is indeed a revelation from God. Further-more, is it not possible for Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to be a Prophet, as many Prophets and Messengers were sent before him? If the answer to this query is that there is nothing that prevents this - we then ask, 'why do you reject his Prophethood, and confirm the Prophethood of the Prophets be-fore him?'

13. Man cannot bring about laws similar to the laws of Islam which deal with every aspect of life, such as transactions, marriage, social conduct, politics, acts of worship and the like. So, how can an unlettered man bring something like this? Isn't this a clear proof and sign of his Prophethood?

14. The Prophet (pbuh) did not start calling people to Islam until he turned forty years old. His youth had passed and the age in which he should have rest and spend his time leisurely, was the age in which he was commissioned as a Prophet and charged with the dissemination of Islam.

Thomas Carlyle, said:

It goes greatly against the impostor theory, the fact that he lived in this entirely unexceptionable, entirely quiet and commonplace way, till the heat of his years was done. He was forty before he talked of any mission from Heaven. All his ir-regularities, real and supposed, date from after his fiftieth year, when the good Kadijah died. All his "ambition," seem-ingly, had been, hitherto, to live an honest life; his "fame," the mere good opinion of neighbors that knew him, had been suf-ficient hitherto. Not till he was already getting old, the pruri-ent heat of his life all burnt out, and _peace_ growing to be the chief thing this world could give him, did he start on the "career of ambition;" and, belying all his past character and existence, set up as a wretched empty charlatan to acquire what he could now no longer enjoy! For my share, I have no faith whatever in that.⁴⁸

Surah 47. Muhammad (this part of the Quran was reveled when Muhammad was forced out of mecca & it was a time of war & crimes against Muslims)

- 1.** Those who reject Allah and hinder (men) from the Path of Allah,- their deeds will Allah render astray (from their mark).
- 2.** But those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, and believe in the (Revelation)

9 sent down to Muhammad - for it is the Truth from their Lord,- He will remove from them their ills and improve their condition.

3. This because those who reject Allah follow vanities, while those who believe follow the Truth from their Lord: Thus does Allah set forth for men their lessons by similitudes.

4. Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in war), smite at their necks; At length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them): thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom: Until the war lays down its burdens. Thus (are ye commanded): but if it had been Allah's Will, He could certainly have exacted retribution from them (Himself); but (He lets you fight) in order to test you, some with others. But those who are slain in the Way of Allah,- He will never let their deeds be lost.

5. Soon will He guide them and improve their condition,

6. And admit them to the Garden which He has announced for them.

7. O ye who believe! If ye will aid (the cause of) Allah, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly.

8. But those who reject (Allah),- for them is destruction, and (Allah) will render their deeds astray (from their mark).

9. That is because they hate the Revelation of Allah. so He has made their deeds fruitless.

10. Do they not travel through the earth, and see what was the End of those before them (who did evil)? Allah brought utter destruction on them, and similar (fates await) those who reject Allah.

11. That is because Allah is the Protector of those who believe, but those who reject Allah have no protector.

12. Verily Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds, to Gardens beneath which rivers flow; while those who reject Allah will enjoy (this world) and eat as cattle eat; and the Fire will be their abode.

13. And how many cities, with more power than thy city which has driven thee out, have We destroyed (for their sins)? and there was none to aid them.

14. Is then one who is on a clear (Path) from his Lord, no better than one to whom the evil of his conduct seems pleasing, and such as follow their own lusts?

15. (Here is) a Parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear. In it there are for them all kinds of fruits; and Grace from their Lord. (Can those in such Bliss) be compared to such as shall dwell for ever in the Fire, and be given, to drink, boiling water, so that it cuts up their bowels (to pieces)?

16. And among them are men who listen to thee, but in the end, when they go out from thee, they say to those who have received Knowledge, "What is it he said just then?" Such

are men whose hearts Allah has sealed, and who follow their own lusts.

17. But to those who receive Guidance, He increases the (light of) Guidance, and bestows on them their Piety and Restraint (from evil).

18. Do they then only wait for the Hour,- that it should come on them of a sudden? But already have come some tokens thereof, and when it (actually) is on them, how can they benefit then by their admonition?

19. Know, therefore, that there is no god but Allah, and ask forgiveness for thy fault, and for the men and women who believe: for Allah knows how ye move about and how ye dwell in your homes.

20. Those who believe say, "Why is not a sura sent down (for us)?" But when a sura of basic or categorical meaning is revealed, and fighting is mentioned therein, thou wilt see those in whose hearts is a disease looking at thee with a look of one in swoon at the approach of death. But more fitting for them-

21. Were it to obey and say what is just, and when a matter is resolved on, it were best for them if they were true to Allah.

22. Then, is it to be expected of you, if ye were put in authority, that ye will do mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin?

23. Such are the men whom Allah has cursed for He has made them deaf and blinded their sight.

24. Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up by them?

25. Those who turn back as apostates after Guidance was clearly shown to them,- the Evil One has instigated them and busied them up with false hopes.

26. This, because they said to those who hate what Allah has revealed, "We will obey you in part of (this) matter"; but Allah knows their (inner) secrets.

27. But how (will it be) when the angels take their souls at death, and smite their faces and their backs?

28. This because they followed that which called forth the Wrath of Allah, and they hated Allah's good pleasure; so He made their deeds of no effect.

29. Or do those in whose hearts is a disease, think that Allah will not bring to light all their rancour?

30. Had We so wiled, We could have shown them up to thee, and thou shouldst have known them by their marks: but surely thou wilt know them by the tone of their speech! And Allah

31. And We shall try you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience; and We shall try your reported (mettle).

32. Those who reject Allah, hinder (men) from the Path of Allah, and resist the Messenger, after Guidance has been clearly shown to them, will not injure Allah in the least, but He will make their deeds of no effect.

33. O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the apostle, and make not vain your deeds!

34. Those who reject Allah, and hinder (men) from the Path of Allah, then die rejecting Allah,- Allah will not forgive them.

35. Be not weary and faint-hearted, crying for peace, when ye should be uppermost: for Allah is with you, and will never put you in loss for your (good) deeds.

36. The life of this world is but play and amusement: and if ye believe and guard against Evil, He will grant you your recompense, and will not ask you (to give up) your possessions.

37. If He were to ask you for all of them, and press you, ye would covetously withhold, and He would bring out all your ill-feeling.

38. Behold, ye are those invited to spend (of your substance) in the Way of Allah. But among you are some that are niggardly. But any who are niggardly are so at the expense of their own souls. But Allah is free of all wants, and it is ye that are needy. If ye turn back (from the Path), He will substitute in your stead another people; then they would not be like you! (Quran)

Muhammad In The Bible By *Dr. Jamal Badawi*

Those who follow the Apostle, the unlettered Prophet, Whom they find mentioned in their own Scriptures, in the Torah and the Gospel... (Holy Qu'ran: VII - 157; Translation: Yusuf Ali)

BIBLE PROPHECIES ABOUT THE ADVENT OF MUHAMMAD

Abraham is widely regarded as the Patriarch of monotheism and the common father of the Jews, Christians and Muslims. Through His second son, Isaac, came all Israelite prophets including such towering figures as Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus. May peace and blessings be upon them all. The advent of these great prophets was in partial fulfillment of God's promises to bless the nations of earth through the descendants of Abraham (**Genesis 12:2-3**). Such fulfillment is wholeheartedly accepted by Muslims whose faith considers the belief in and respect of all prophets an article of faith.

Was the first born son of Abraham (Ishmael) and his descendants included in God's covenant and promise? A few verses from the Bible may help shed some light on this question;

1) **Genesis 12:2-3** speaks of God's promise to Abraham and his descendants before any child was born to him.

2) **Genesis 17:4** reiterates God's promise after the birth of Ishmael and before the birth of Isaac.

3) In **Genesis, ch. 21**. Isaac is specifically blessed but Ishmael was also specifically blessed and promised by God to become "a great nation" especially in **Genesis 21:13, 18**.

4) According to **Deuteronomy 21:15-17** the traditional rights and privileges of the first born son are not to be affected by the social status of his mother (being a "free" woman such as Sarah, Isaac's mother, or a "Bondwoman" such as Hagar, Ishmael's mother). This is only consistent with the moral and humanitarian principles of all revealed faiths.

5) The full legitimacy of Ishmael as Abraham's son and "seed" and the full legitimacy of his mother, Hagar, as Abraham's wife are clearly stated in **Genesis 21:13** and **16:3**. After Jesus, the last Israelite messenger and prophet, it was time that God's promise to bless Ishmael and his descendants be fulfilled. Less than 600 years after Jesus, came the last messenger of God, Muhammad, from the progeny of Abraham through Ishmael. God's blessing of both of the main branches of Abraham's family tree was now fulfilled. But are there additional corroborating evidence that the Bible did in fact foretell the advent of prophet Muhammad?

MUHAMMAD:

The Prophet Like Unto Moses

Long time after Abraham, God's promise to send the long-awaited Messenger was repeated this time in Moses' words.

In **Deuteronomy 18:18**, Moses spoke of the prophet to be sent by God who is:

1) From among the Israelite's "brethren", a reference to their Ishmaelite cousins as Ishmael was the other son of Abraham who was explicitly promised to become a "great nation".

2) A prophet like unto Moses. There were hardly any two prophets, who were so much alike as Moses and **Muhammad**. Both were given comprehensive law code of life, both encountered their enemies and were victors in miraculous ways, both were accepted as prophets/statesmen and both migrated following conspiracies to assassinate them. Analogies between Moses and Jesus overlooks not only the above similarities but other crucial ones as well (e.g. the natural birth, family life and death of Moses and **Muhammad** but not of Jesus, who was regarded by His followers as the Son of God and not exclusively a messenger of God, as Moses and **Muhammad** were and as Muslim belief Jesus was).

Deuteronomy 33:1-2 combines references to Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. It speaks of God (i.e. God's revelation) coming from Sinai, rising from Seir (probably the village of Sa'ir near Jerusalem) and shining forth from Paran. According to **Genesis 21:21**, the wilderness of Paran was the place where Ishmael settled (i.e. Arabia, specifically Mecca).

Indeed the King James version of the Bible mentions the pilgrims passing through the valley of Ba'ca (another name of Mecca) in **Psalms 84:4-6**.

Isaiah 42:1-13 speaks of the beloved of God. His elect and messenger who will bring down a law to be awaited in the isles and who "shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgement on earth." Verse 11, connects that awaited one with the descendants of Ke'dar. Who is Ke'dar? According to **Genesis 25:13**, Ke'dar was the second son of Ishmael, the ancestor of prophet **Muhammad**.

MUHAMMAD'S MIGRATION FROM MECCA TO MEDINA: PROPHECIED IN THE BIBLE?

Habakkuk 3:3 speaks of God (God's help) coming from Te'man (an Oasis North of Medina according to J. Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible), and the holy one (coming) from Paran. That holy one who under persecution migrated from Paran (Mecca) to be received enthusiastically in Medina was none but prophet **Muhammad**.

Indeed the incident of the migration of the prophet and his persecuted followers is vividly described in **Isaiah 21:13-17**. That section foretold as well about the battle of Badr in which the few ill-armed faithful miraculously defeated the "mighty" men of Ke'dar, who sought to destroy Islam and intimidate their own folks who turned -to Islam.

THE QUR'AN (KORAN) FORETOLD IN THE BIBLE?

For twenty-three years, God's words (the Qur'an) were truly put into **Muhammad's** mouth. He was not the "author" of the Qur'an. The Qur'an was dictated to him by Angel Gabriel who asked **Muhammad** to simply repeat the words of the Qur'an as he heard them. These words were then committed to memory and to writing by those who hear them during **Muhammad's** life time and under his supervision.

Was it a coincidence that the prophet "like unto Moses" from the "brethren" of the Israelites (i.e. from the Ishmaelites) was also described as one in whose mouth God will put his words and that he will speak in the name of God, (**Deuteronomy 18:18-20**). Was it also a coincidence the "Paraclete" that Jesus foretold to come after Him was described as one who "shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak (**John 16:13**)

Was it another coincidence that Isaiah ties between the messenger connected with Ke'dar and a new song (a scripture in a new language) to be sang unto the Lord (**Isaiah 42:10-11**). More explicitly, prophesies Isaiah "For with stammering lips, and another tongue, will he speak to this people" (**Isaiah 28:11**). This latter verse correctly describes the "stammering lips" of **Prophet Muhammad** reflecting the state of tension and concentration he went through at the time of

revelation. Another related point is that the Qur'an was revealed in piece-meals over a span of twenty three years. It is interesting to compare this with **Isaiah 28:10** which speaks of the same thing.

THAT PROPHET- PARACLETE- MUHAMMAD

Up to the time of Jesus (peace be upon him), the Israelites were still awaiting for that prophet like unto Moses prophesied in **Deuteronomy 18:18**. When John the Baptist came, they asked him if he was Christ and he said "no". They asked him if he was Elias and he said "no". Then, in apparent reference to **Deuteronomy 18:18**, they asked him "Art thou that Prophet" and he answered, "no". (**John 1: 19-21**).

In the Gospel according to **John (Chapters 14, 15, 16)** Jesus spoke of the "Paraclete" or comforter who will come after him, who will be sent by Father as another Paraclete, who will teach new things which the contemporaries of Jesus could not bear. While the Paraclete is described as the spirit of truth, (whose meaning resemble **Muhammad's** famous title Al-Amin, the trustworthy), he is identified in one verse as the Holy Ghost (**John 14:26**). Such a designation is however inconsistent with the profile of that Paraclete. In the words of the **Dictionary of the Bible**, (Ed. J. Mackenzie) "These items, it must be admitted do not give an entirely coherent picture."

Indeed history tells us that many early Christians understood the Paraclete to be a man and not a spirit. This might explain the followings who responded to some who claimed, without meeting the criteria stipulated by Jesus, to be the awaited "Paraclete".

It was **Prophet Muhammad** (peace be upon him) who was the Paraclete, Comforter, helper, admonisher sent by God after Jesus. He testified of Jesus, taught new things which could not be borne at Jesus' time, he spoke what he heard (revelation), he dwells with the believers (through his well-preserved teachings). Such teachings will remain forever because he was the last messenger of God, **the only Universal Messenger to unite the whole of humanity under God and on the path of PRESERVED truth**. He told of many things to come which "came to pass" in the minutest detail meeting the criterion given by Moses to distinguish between the true prophet and the false prophets (**Deuteronomy 18:22**). He did reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgement (**John 16:8-11**)

WAS THE SHIFT OF RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP PROPHECIED?

Following the rejection of the last Israelite prophet, Jesus, it was about time that God's promise to make Ishmael a great nation be fulfilled (**Genesis 21:13, 18**)

In **Matthew 21:19-21**, Jesus spoke of the fruitless fig tree (A Biblical symbol of prophetic heritage) to be cleared after being given a last chance of three years (the duration of Jesus' ministry) to give fruit. In a later verse in the same chapter, Jesus said: "Therefore, say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof" (**Matthew 21:43**). That nation of Ishmael's descendants (the rejected stone in **Matthew 21:42**) which was victorious against all super-powers of its time as prophesied by Jesus: "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (**Matthew 21:44**).

OUT OF CONTEXT COINCIDENCE? Is it possible that the numerous prophecies cited here are all individually and combined out of context misinterpretations? Is the opposite true, that such infrequently studied verses fit together consistently and clearly point to the advent of the man who changed the course of human history, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Is it reasonable to conclude that all these prophecies, appearing in different books of the Bible and spoken by various prophets at different times were all coincidence? If this is so here is another strange "coincidence"!

One of the signs of the prophet to come from Paran (Mecca) is that he will come with "ten thousands of saints" (**Deuteronomy 33:2 KJV**). That was the number of faithful who accompanied **Prophet Muhammad** to Paran (Mecca) in his victorious, bloodless return to his birthplace to destroy the remaining symbols of idolatry in the Ka'bah.

Says God as quoted by Moses:

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. (**Deuteronomy 18:19**)

Biography of Muhammad(PBUH) by a Muslim

by Muhammad Hamidullah (Centre Culturel Islamique, Paris, 1969)

[Taken from Introduction to Islam by Muhammad Hamidullah (Centre Culturel Islamique, Paris, 1969), with some changes to make it more readable. The changes are marked by pairs of brackets like around this paragraph. Dr. Hamidullah's present address is: 9 Beaver Court, Wilkes Barre PA, 18702, USA.]

IN the annals of men, individuals have not been lacking who conspicuously devoted their lives to the socio-religious reform of their connected peoples. We find them in every epoch and in all lands. In India, there lived those who transmitted to the world the Vedas, and there was also the great Gautama Buddha; China had its Confucius; the Avesta was produced in Iran. Babylonia gave to the world one of the greatest reformers, the Prophet Abraham (not to speak of such of his ancestors as Enoch and Noah about whom we have very scanty information). The Jewish people may rightly be proud of a long series of reformers: Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, and Jesus among others.

2. Two points are to note: Firstly these reformers claimed in general to be the bearers each of a Divine mission, and they left behind them sacred books incorporating codes of life for the guidance of their peoples. Secondly there followed fratricidal wars, and massacres and genocides became the order of the day, causing more or less a complete loss of these Divine messages. As to the books of Abraham, we know them only by the name; and as for the books of Moses, records tell us how they were repeatedly destroyed and only partly restored.

Concept of God

3. If one should judge from the relics of the past already brought to light of the homo sapiens, one finds that man has always been conscious of the existence of a Supreme Being, the Master and Creator of all. Methods and approaches may have differed, but the people of every epoch have left proofs of their attempts to obey God. Communication with the Omnipresent yet invisible God has also been recognised as possible in connection with a small fraction of men with noble and exalted spirits. Whether this communication assumed the nature of an incarnation of the Divinity or simply resolved itself into a medium of reception of Divine messages (through inspiration or revelation), the purpose in each case was the guidance of the people. It was but natural that the interpretations and explanations of certain systems should have proved more vital and convincing than others.

3/a. Every system of metaphysical thought develops its own terminology. In the course of time terms acquire a significance hardly contained in the word and translations fall short of their purpose. Yet there is no other method to make people of one group understand the thoughts of another. Non-Muslim readers in particular are requested to bear in mind this aspect which is a real yet unavoidable handicap.

4. By the end of the 6th century, after the birth of Jesus Christ, men had already made great progress in diverse walks of life. At that time there were some religions which openly proclaimed that they were reserved for definite races and groups of men only, of course they bore no remedy for the ills of humanity at large. There were also a few which claimed universality, but declared that the salvation of man lay in the renunciation of the world. These were the religions for the elite, and catered for an extremely limited number of men. We need not speak of regions where there existed no religion at all, where atheism and materialism reigned supreme, where the thought was solely of occupying one self with one's own pleasures, without any regard or consideration for the rights of others.

Arabia

5. A perusal of the map of the major hemisphere (from the point of view of the proportion of land to sea), shows the Arabian Peninsula lying at the confluence of the three great continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. At the time in question, this extensive Arabian subcontinent composed mostly of desert areas was inhabited by people of settled habitations as well as nomads. Often it was found that members of the same tribe were divided into these two groups, and that they preserved a relationship although following different modes of life. The means of subsistence in Arabia were meagre. The desert had its handicaps, and trade caravans were features of greater importance than either agriculture or industry. This entailed much travel, and men had to proceed beyond the peninsula to Syria, Egypt, Abyssinia, Iraq, Sind, India and other lands.

6. We do not know much about the Libyanites of Central Arabia, but Yemen was rightly called Arabia Felix. Having once been the seat of the flourishing civilizations of Sheba and Ma'in even before the foundation of the city of Rome had been laid, and having later snatched from the Byzantians and Persians several provinces, greater Yemen which had passed through the hey-day of its existence, was however at this time broken up into innumerable principalities, and even occupied in part by foreign invaders. The Sassanians of Iran, who had penetrated into Yemen

17 had already obtained possession of Eastern Arabia. There was politico-social chaos at the capital (Mada'in = Ctesiphon), and this found reflection in all her territories. Northern Arabia had

succumbed to Byzantine influences, and was faced with its own particular problems. Only Central Arabia remained immune from the demoralising effects of foreign occupation.

7. In this limited area of Central Arabia, the existence of the triangle of Mecca-Ta'if-Madinah seemed something providential. Mecca, desertic, deprived of water and the amenities of agriculture in physical features represented Africa and the burning Sahara. Scarcely fifty miles from there, Ta'if presented a picture of Europe and its frost. Madinah in the North was not less fertile than even the most temperate of Asiatic countries like Syria. If climate has any influence on human character, this triangle standing in the middle of the major hemisphere was, more than any other region of the earth, a miniature reproduction of the entire world. And here was born a descendant of the Babylonian Abraham, and the Egyptian Hagar, Muhammad the Prophet of Islam, a Meccan by origin and yet with stock related, both to Madinah and Ta'if.

Religion

8. From the point of view of religion, Arabia was idolatrous; only a few individuals had embraced religions like Christianity, Mazdaism, etc. The Meccans did possess the notion of the One God, but they believed also that idols had the power to intercede with Him. Curiously enough, they did not believe in the Resurrection and Afterlife. They had preserved the rite of the pilgrimage to the House of the One God, the Ka'bah, an institution set up under divine inspiration by their ancestor Abraham, yet the two thousand years that separated them from Abraham had caused to degenerate this pilgrimage into the spectacle of a commercial fair and an occasion of senseless idolatry which far from producing any good, only served to ruin their individual behaviour, both social and spiritual.

Society

9. In spite of the comparative poverty in natural resources, Mecca was the most developed of the three points of the triangle. Of the three, Mecca alone had a city-state, governed by a council of ten hereditary chiefs who enjoyed a clear division of power. (There was a minister of foreign relations, a minister guardian of the temple, a minister of oracles, a minister guardian of offerings to the temple, one to determine the torts and the damages payable, another in charge of the municipal council or parliament to enforce the decisions of the ministries. There were also ministers in charge of military affairs like custodianship of the flag, leadership of the cavalry etc.). As well reputed caravan-leaders, the Meccans were able to obtain permission from neighbouring empires like Iran, Byzantium and Abyssinia – and to enter into agreements with the tribes that lined the routes traversed by the caravans – to visit their countries and transact import and export business. They also provided escorts to foreigners when they passed through their country as well as the territory of allied tribes, in Arabia (cf. Ibn Habib, Muhabbar). Although not interested much in the preservation of ideas and records in writing, they passionately cultivated arts and letters like poetry, oratory discourses and folk tales. Women

18 were generally well treated, they enjoyed the privilege of possessing property in their own right, they gave their consent to marriage contracts, in which they could even add the condition of reserving their right to divorce their husbands. They could remarry when widowed or divorced. Burying girls alive did exist in certain classes, but that was rare.

Birth of the Prophet

10. It was in the midst of such conditions and environments that Muhammad was born in 569 after Christ. His father, ‘Abdullah had died some weeks earlier, and it was his grandfather who took him in charge. According to the prevailing custom, the child was entrusted to a Bedouin foster-mother, with whom he passed several years in the desert. All biographers state that the infant prophet sucked only one breast of his foster-mother, leaving the other for the sustenance of his foster-brother. When the child was brought back home, his mother, Aminah, took him to his maternal uncles at Madinah to visit the tomb of ‘Abdullah. During the return journey, he lost his mother who died a sudden death. At Mecca, another bereavement awaited him, in the death of his affectionate grandfather. Subjected to such privations, he was at the age of eight, consigned at last to the care of his uncle, Abu-Talib, a man who was generous of nature but always short of resources and hardly able to provide for his family.

11. Young Muhammad had therefore to start immediately to earn his livelihood; he served as a shepherd boy to some neighbours. At the age of ten he accompanied his uncle to Syria when he was leading a caravan there. No other travels of Abu-Talib are mentioned, but there are references to his having set up a shop in Mecca. (Ibn Qutaibah, Ma’arif). It is possible that Muhammad helped him in this enterprise also.

12. By the time he was twenty-five, Muhammad had become well known in the city for the integrity of his disposition and the honesty of his character. A rich widow, Khadijah, took him in her employ and consigned to him her goods to be taken for sale to Syria. Delighted with the unusual profits she obtained as also by the personal charms of her agent, she offered him her hand. According to divergent reports, she was either 28 or 40 years of age at that time, (medical reasons prefer the age of 28 since she gave birth to five more children). The union proved happy. Later, we see him sometimes in the fair of Hubashah (Yemen), and at least once in the country of the ‘Abd al-Qais (Bahrain-Oman), as mentioned by Ibn Hanbal. There is every reason to believe that this refers to the great fair of Daba (Oman), where, according to Ibn al-Kalbi (cf. Ibn Habib, Muhabbar), the traders of China, of Hind and Sind (India, Pakistan), of Persia, of the East and the West assembled every year, travelling both by land and sea. There is also mention of a commercial partner of Muhammad at Mecca. This person, Sa’ib by name reports: “We relayed each other; if Muhammad led the caravan, he did not enter his house on his return to Mecca without clearing accounts with me; and if I led the caravan, he would on my return enquire about my welfare and speak nothing about his own capital entrusted to me.”

An Order of Chivalry

13. Foreign traders often brought their goods to Mecca for sale. One day a certain Yemenite (of the tribe of Zubaid) improvised a satirical poem against some Meccans who had refused to pay

19 him the price of what he had sold, and others who had not supported his claim or had failed to come to his help when he was victimised. Zuhair, uncle and chief of the tribe of the Prophet, felt great remorse on hearing this just satire. He called for a meeting of certain chieftains in the city, and organized an order of chivalry, called Hilf al-fudul, with the aim and object of aiding the oppressed in Mecca, irrespective of their being dwellers of the city or aliens. Young Muhammad became an enthusiastic member of the organisation. Later in life he used to say: "I have participated in it, and I am not prepared to give up that privilege even against a herd of camels; if somebody should appeal to me even today, by virtue of that pledge, I shall hurry to his help."

Beginning of Religious Consciousness

14. Not much is known about the religious practices of Muhammad until he was thirty-five years old, except that he had never worshipped idols. This is substantiated by all his biographers. It may be stated that there were a few others in Mecca, who had likewise revolted against the senseless practice of paganism, although conserving their fidelity to the Ka'bah as the house dedicated to the One God by its builder Abraham.

15. About the year 605 of the Christian era, the draperies on the outer wall of the Ka'bah took fire. The building was affected and could not bear the brunt of the torrential rains that followed. The reconstruction of the Ka'bah was thereupon undertaken. Each citizen contributed according to his means; and only the gifts of honest gains were accepted. Everybody participated in the work of construction, and Muhammad's shoulders were injured in the course of transporting stones. To identify the place whence the ritual of circumambulation began, there had been set a black stone in the wall of the Ka'bah. dating probably from the time of Abraham himself. There was rivalry among the citizens for obtaining the honour of transposing this stone in its place. When there was danger of blood being shed, somebody suggested leaving the matter to Providence, and accepting the arbitration of him who should happen to arrive there first. It chanced that Muhammad just then turned up there for work as usual. He was popularly known by the appellation of al-Amin (the honest), and everyone accepted his arbitration without hesitation. Muhammad placed a sheet of cloth on the ground, put the stone on it and asked the chiefs of all the tribes in the city to lift together the cloth. Then he himself placed the stone in its proper place, in one of the angles of the building, and everybody was satisfied.

16. It is from this moment that we find Muhammad becoming more and more absorbed in spiritual meditations. Like his grandfather, he used to retire during the whole month of Ramadan to a cave in Jabal-an-Nur (mountain of light). The cave is called 'Ghar-i-Hira' or the cave of research. There he prayed, meditated, and shared his meagre provisions with the travellers who happened to pass by.

Revelation

17. He was forty years old, and it was the fifth consecutive year since his annual retreats, when one night towards the end of the month of Ramadan, an angel came to visit him, and announced that God had chosen him as His messenger to all mankind. The angel taught him the mode of

20 ablutions, the way of worshipping God and the conduct of prayer. He communicated to him the following Divine message:

With the name of God, the Most Merciful, the All-Merciful.

Read: with the name of thy Lord Who created,

Created man from what clings,

Read: and thy Lord is the Most Bounteous,

Who taught by the pen,

Taught man what he knew not. (Quran 96:1-5)

18. Deeply affected, he returned home and related to his wife what had happened, expressing his fears that it might have been something diabolic or the action of evil spirits. She consoled him, saying that he had always been a man of charity and generosity, helping the poor, the orphans, the widows and the needy, and assured him that God would protect him against all evil.

19. Then came a pause in revelation, extending over three years. The Prophet must have felt at first a shock, then a calm, an ardent desire, and after a period of waiting, a growing impatience or nostalgia. The news of the first vision had spread and at the pause the sceptics in the city had begun to mock at him and cut bitter jokes. They went so far as to say that God had forsaken him.

20. During the three years of waiting, the Prophet had given himself up more and more to prayers and to spiritual practices. The revelations were then resumed and God assured him that He had not at all forsaken him: on the contrary it was He Who had guided him to the right path: therefore he should take care of the orphans and the destitute, and proclaim the bounty of God on him (cf. Q. 93:3-11). This was in reality an order to preach. Another revelation directed him to warn people against evil practices, to exhort them to worship none but the One God, and to abandon everything that would displease God (Q. 74:2-7). Yet another revelation commanded him to warn his own near relatives (Q. 26:214); and: "Proclaim openly that which thou art commanded, and withdraw from the Associators (idolaters). Lo! we defend thee from the scoffers" (15:94-5). According to Ibn Ishaq, the first revelation (n. 17) had come to the Prophet during his sleep, evidently to reduce the shock. Later revelations came in full wakefulness.

The Mission

21. The Prophet began by preaching his mission secretly first among his intimate friends, then among the members of his own tribe and thereafter publicly in the city and suburbs. He insisted on the belief in One Transcendent God, in Resurrection and the Last Judgement. He invited men to charity and beneficence. He took necessary steps to preserve through writing the revelations he was receiving, and ordered his adherents also to learn them by heart. This continued all through his life, since the Quran was not revealed all at once, but in fragments as occasions

22. The number of his adherents increased gradually, but with the denunciation of paganism, the opposition also grew intenser on the part of those who were firmly attached to their ancestral beliefs. This opposition degenerated in the course of time into physical torture of the Prophet and of those who had embraced his religion. These were stretched on burning sands, cauterized with red hot iron and imprisoned with chains on their feet. Some of them died of the effects of torture, but none would renounce his religion. In despair, the Prophet Muhammad advised his companions to quit their native town and take refuge abroad, in Abyssinia, “where governs a just ruler, in whose realm nobody is oppressed” (Ibn Hisham). Dozens of Muslims profited by his advice, though not all. These secret flights led to further persecution of those who remained behind.

23. The Prophet Muhammad [was instructed to call this] religion “Islam,” i.e. submission to the will of God. Its distinctive features are two:

A harmonious equilibrium between the temporal and the spiritual (the body and the soul), permitting a full enjoyment of all the good that God has created, (Quran 7:32), enjoining at the same time on everybody duties towards God, such as worship, fasting, charity, etc. Islam was to be the religion of the masses and not merely of the elect.

A universality of the call – all the believers becoming brothers and equals without any distinction of class or race or tongue. The only superiority which it recognizes is a personal one, based on the greater fear of God and greater piety (Quran 49:13).

Social Boycott

24. When a large number of the Meccan Muslims migrated to Abyssinia, the leaders of paganism sent an ultimatum to the tribe of the Prophet, demanding that he should be excommunicated and outlawed and delivered to the pagans for being put to death. Every member of the tribe, Muslim and non-Muslim rejected the demand. (cf. Ibn Hisham). Thereupon the city decided on a complete boycott of the tribe: Nobody was to talk to them or have commercial or matrimonial relations with them. The group of Arab tribes called Ahabish, inhabiting the suburbs, who were allies of the Meccans, also joined in the boycott, causing stark misery among the innocent victims consisting of children, men and women, the old and the sick and the feeble. Some of them succumbed yet nobody would hand over the Prophet to his persecutors. An uncle of the Prophet, Abu Lahab, however left his tribesmen and participated in the boycott along with the pagans. After three dire years, during which the victims were obliged to devour even crushed hides, four or five non-Muslims, more humane than the rest and belonging to different clans proclaimed publicly their denunciation of the unjust boycott. At the same time, the document promulgating the pact of boycott which had been hung in the temple, was found, as Muhammad had predicted, eaten by white ants, that spared nothing but the words God and Muhammad. The boycott was lifted, yet owing to the privations that were undergone the wife and Abu Talib, the chief of the tribe and uncle of the Prophet died soon after. Another uncle of the Prophet, Abu-Lahab, who was an inveterate enemy of Islam, now succeeded to the headship of the tribe. (cf.

The Ascension

25. It was at this time that the Prophet Muhammad was granted the mi'raj (ascension): He saw in a vision that he was received on heaven by God, and was witness of the marvels of the celestial regions. Returning, he brought for his community, as a Divine gift, the [ritual prayer of Islam, the salaah], which constitutes a sort of communion between man and God. It may be recalled that in the last part of Muslim service of worship, the faithful employ as a symbol of their being in the very presence of God, not concrete objects as others do at the time of communion, but the very words of greeting exchanged between the Prophet Muhammad and God on the occasion of the former's mi'raj: "The blessed and pure greetings for God! – Peace be with thee, O Prophet, as well as the mercy and blessing of God! – Peace be with us and with all the [righteous] servants of God!" The Christian term "communion" implies participation in the Divinity. Finding it pretentious, Muslims use the term "ascension" towards God and reception in His presence, God remaining God and man remaining man and no confusion between the twain.

26. The news of this celestial meeting led to an increase in the hostility of the pagans of Mecca; and the Prophet was obliged to quit his native town in search of an asylum elsewhere. He went to his maternal uncles in Ta'if, but returned immediately to Mecca, as the wicked people of that town chased the Prophet out of their city by pelting stones on him and wounding him.

Migration to Madinah

27. The annual pilgrimage of the Ka'bah brought to Mecca people from all parts of Arabia. The Prophet Muhammad tried to persuade one tribe after another to afford him shelter and allow him to carry on his mission of reform. The contingents of fifteen tribes, whom he approached in succession, refused to do so more or less brutally, but he did not despair. Finally he met half a dozen inhabitants of Madinah who being neighbour of the Jews and the Christians, had some notion of prophets and Divine messages. They knew also that these "people of the Books" were awaiting the arrival of a prophet – a last comforter. So these Madinans decided not to lose the opportunity of obtaining an advance over others, and forthwith embraced Islam, promising further to provide additional adherents and necessary help from Madinah. The following year a dozen new Madinans took the oath of allegiance to him and requested him to provide with a missionary teacher. The work of the missionary, Mus'ab, proved very successful and he led a contingent of seventy-three new converts to Mecca, at the time of the pilgrimage. These invited the Prophet and his Meccan companions to migrate to their town, and promised to shelter the Prophet and to treat him and his companions as their own kith and kin. Secretly and in small groups, the greater part of the Muslims emigrated to Madinah. Upon this the pagans of Mecca not only confiscated the property of the evacuees, but devised a plot to assassinate the Prophet. It became now impossible for him to remain at home. It is worthy of mention, that in spite of their hostility to his mission, the pagans had unbounded confidence in his probity, so much so that many of them used to deposit their savings with him. The Prophet Muhammad now entrusted all these deposits to 'Ali, a cousin of his, with instructions to return in due course to the rightful owners. He then left the town secretly in the company of his faithful friend, Abu-Bakr. After

23 several adventures, they succeeded in reaching Madinah in safety. This happened in 622, whence starts the Hijrah calendar.

Reorganization of the Community 28. For the better rehabilitation of the displaced immigrants, the Prophet created a fraternization between them and an equal number of well-to-do Madinans. The families of each pair of the contractual brothers worked together to earn their livelihood, and aided one another in the business of life.

29. Further he thought that the development of the man as a whole would be better achieved if he co-ordinated religion and politics as two constituent parts of one whole. To this end he invited the representatives of the Muslims as well as the non-Muslim inhabitants of the region: Arabs, Jews, Christians and others, and suggested the establishment of a City-State in Madinah. With their assent, he endowed the city with a written constitution – the first of its kind in the world – in which he defined the duties and rights both of the citizens and the head of the State – the Prophet Muhammad was unanimously hailed as such – and abolished the customary private justice. The administration of justice became henceforward the concern of the central organisation of the community of the citizens. The document laid down principles of defence and foreign policy: it organized a system of social insurance, called *ma'aqil*, in cases of too heavy obligations. It recognized that the Prophet Muhammad would have the final word in all differences, and that there was no limit to his power of legislation. It recognized also explicitly liberty of religion, particularly for the Jews, to whom the constitutional act afforded equality with Muslims in all that concerned life in this world (cf. *infra* n. 303).

30. Muhammad journeyed several times with a view to win the neighbouring tribes and to conclude with them treaties of alliance and mutual help. With their help, he decided to bring to bear economic pressure on the Meccan pagans, who had confiscated the property of the Muslim evacuees and also caused innumerable damage. Obstruction in the way of the Meccan caravans and their passage through the Madinan region exasperated the pagans, and a bloody struggle ensued.

31. In the concern for the material interests of the community, the spiritual aspect was never neglected. Hardly a year had passed after the migration to Madinah, when the most rigorous of spiritual disciplines, the fasting for the whole month of Ramadan every year, was imposed on every adult Muslim, man and woman.

Struggle Against Intolerance and Unbelief

32. Not content with the expulsion of the Muslim compatriots, the Meccans sent an ultimatum to the Madinans, demanding the surrender or at least the expulsion of Muhammad and his companions but evidently all such efforts proved in vain. A few months later, in the year 2 H., they sent a powerful army against the Prophet, who opposed them at Badr; and the pagans thrice as numerous as the Muslims, were routed. After a year of preparation, the Meccans again invaded Madinah to avenge the defeat of Badr. They were now four times as numerous as the Muslims. After a bloody encounter at Uhud, the enemy retired, the issue being indecisive. The mercenaries in the Meccan army did not want to take too much risk, or endanger their safety.

24 33. In the meanwhile the Jewish citizens of Madinah began to foment trouble. About the time of the victory of Badr, one of their leaders, Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf, proceeded to Mecca to give assurance of his alliance with the pagans, and to incite them to a war of revenge. After the battle of Uhud, the tribe of the same chieftain plotted to assassinate the Prophet by throwing on him a mill-stone from above a tower, when he had gone to visit their locality. In spite of all this, the only demand the Prophet made of the men of this tribe was to quit the Madinan region, taking with them all their properties, after selling their immovables and recovering their debts from the Muslims. The clemency thus extended had an effect contrary to what was hoped. The exiled not only contacted the Meccans, but also the tribes of the North, South and East of Madinah, mobilized military aid, and planned from Khaibar an invasion of Madinah, with forces four times more numerous than those employed at Uhud. The Muslims prepared for a siege, and dug a ditch to defend themselves against this hardest of all trials. Although the defection of the Jews still remaining inside Madinah at a later stage upset all strategy, yet with a sagacious diplomacy, the Prophet succeeded in breaking up the alliance, and the different enemy groups retired one after the other.

34. Alcoholic drinks, gambling and games of chance were at this time declared forbidden for the Muslims.

The Reconciliation

35. The Prophet tried once more to reconcile the Meccans and proceeded to Mecca. The barring of the route of their Northern caravans had ruined their economy. The Prophet promised them transit security, extradition of their fugitives and the fulfillment of every condition they desired, agreeing even to return to Madinah without accomplishing the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah. Thereupon the two contracting parties promised at Hudaibiyah in the suburbs of Mecca, not only the maintenance of peace, but also the observance of neutrality in their conflicts with third parties.

36. Profiting by the peace, the Prophet launched an intensive programme for the propagation of his religion. He addressed missionary letters to the foreign rulers of Byzantium, Iran, Abyssinia and other lands. The Byzantine autocrat priest – Dughatur of the Arabs – embraced Islam, but for this, was lynched by the Christian mob; the prefect of Ma'an (Palestine) suffered the same fate, and was decapitated and crucified by order of the emperor. A Muslim ambassador was assassinated in Syria-Palestine; and instead of punishing the culprit, the emperor Heraclius rushed with his armies to protect him against the punitive expedition sent by the Prophet (battle of Mu'tah).

37. The pagans of Mecca hoping to profit by the Muslim difficulties, violated the terms of their treaty. Upon this, the Prophet himself led an army, ten thousand strong, and surprised Mecca which he occupied in a bloodless manner. As a benevolent conqueror, he caused the vanquished people to assemble, reminded them of their ill deeds, their religious persecution, unjust confiscation of the evacuee property, ceaseless invasions and senseless hostilities for twenty years continuously. He asked them: "Now what do you expect of me?" When everybody lowered his head with shame, the Prophet proclaimed: "May God pardon you; go in peace; there shall be

25 no responsibility on you today; you are free!” He even renounced the claim for the Muslim property confiscated by the pagans. This produced a great psychological change of hearts instantaneously. When a Meccan chief advanced with a fulsome heart towards the Prophet, after hearing this general amnesty, in order to declare his acceptance of Islam, the Prophet told him: “And in my turn, I appoint you the governor of Mecca!” Without leaving a single soldier in the conquered city, the Prophet retired to Madinah. The Islamization of Mecca, which was accomplished in a few hours, was complete.

38. Immediately after the occupation of Mecca, the city of Ta’if mobilized to fight against the Prophet. With some difficulty the enemy was dispersed in the valley of Hunain, but the Muslims preferred to raise the siege of nearby Ta’if and use pacific means to break the resistance of this region. Less than a year later, a delegation from Ta’if came to Madinah offering submission. But it requested exemption from prayer, taxes and military service, and the continuance of the liberty to adultery and fornication and alcoholic drinks. It demanded even the conservation of the temple of the idol al-Lat at Ta’if. But Islam was not a materialist immoral movement; and soon the delegation itself felt ashamed of its demands regarding prayer, adultery and wine. The Prophet consented to concede exemption from payment of taxes and rendering of military service; and added: You need not demolish the temple with your own hands: we shall send agents from here to do the job, and if there should be any consequences, which you are afraid of on account of your superstitions, it will be they who would suffer. This act of the Prophet shows what concessions could be given to new converts. The conversion of the Ta’ifites was so wholehearted that in a short while, they themselves renounced the contracted exemptions, and we find the Prophet nominating a tax collector in their locality as in other Islamic regions.

39. In all these “wars,” extending over a period of ten years, the non-Muslims lost on the battlefield only about 250 persons killed, and the Muslim losses were even less. With these few incursions, the whole continent of Arabia, with its million and more of square miles, was cured of the abscess of anarchy and immorality. During these ten years of disinterested struggle, all the peoples of the Arabian Peninsula and the southern regions of Iraq and Palestine had voluntarily embraced Islam. Some Christian, Jewish and Parsi groups remained attached to their creeds, and they were granted liberty of conscience as well as judicial and juridical autonomy.

40. In the year 10 H., when the Prophet went to Mecca for Hajj (pilgrimage), he met 140,000 Muslims there, who had come from different parts of Arabia to fulfil their religious obligation. He addressed to them his celebrated sermon, in which he gave a resume of his teachings: “Belief in One God without images or symbols, equality of all the Believers without distinction of race or class, the superiority of individuals being based solely on piety; sanctity of life, property and honour; abolition of interest, and of vendettas and private justice; better treatment of women; obligatory inheritance and distribution of the property of deceased persons among near relatives of both sexes, and removal of the possibility of the cumulation of wealth in the hands of the few.” The Quran and the conduct of the Prophet were to serve as the bases of law and a healthy criterion in every aspect of human life.

41. On his return to Madinah, he fell ill; and a few weeks later, when he breathed his last, he had the satisfaction that he had well accomplished the task which he had undertaken – to preach to

42. He bequeathed to posterity, a religion of pure monotheism; he created a well-disciplined State out of the existent chaos and gave peace in place of the war of everybody against everybody else; he established a harmonious equilibrium between the spiritual and the temporal, between the mosque and the citadel; he left a new system of law, which dispensed impartial justice, in which even the head of the State was as much a subject to it as any commoner, and in which religious tolerance was so great that non-Muslim inhabitants of Muslim countries equally enjoyed complete juridical, judicial and cultural autonomy. In the matter of the revenues of the State, the Quran fixed the principles of budgeting, and paid more thought to the poor than to anybody else. The revenues were declared to be in no wise the private property of the head of the State. Above all, the Prophet Muhammad set a noble example and fully practised all that he taught to others.

Biography of Mohammad

He was born in 570 A.D. to Amina and Abdallah, a trader in Mecca – a wealthy caravan trading community, in the renowned tribe of **Quraish**. He became an orphan before his birth and his mother also died when he was 6 years old. His parents did not leave him any wealth. He was taken care of by his grandfather and after his death by his paternal uncle Abu-Talib. His uncle had a large family himself and he was not wealthy. Very soon Mohammed had to support himself by tending the sheep flocks of rich Meccan families as it is reported.

As a young man he started working as a caravan trader for the wealthy **Meccan widow Khadijah**. His work took him to distant places in today's Palestine and Syria and possibly to the North African countries. He became known and trusted because of his attempts to resolve inter-tribal differences. In fact, he was known within his Quraish tribe as “al-Ameen”, or “the trustworthy”.

At the age of 25 he married Khadijah, a twice widowed lady, 15 years of his senior and they had 6 children together, 4 girls and 2 sons (who both died in infancy). He remained married to her for 25 years, in a time and place where unlimited polygamy was quite acceptable and until her death it remained an one-wife marriage.

Mohammed was of a deeply religious nature and had long detested the decadence of his society. It became his habit to meditate from time to time in the Cave of Hera near the summit of Jabal al-Nur, the “Mountain of Light” near Mecca. **He was elevated to prophethood at the age of 40, on Feb.12th 610 A.D.** His first revelation came while fasting and observing night vigil among the peaks of Mount Hera as angel Gabriel appeared to him.

“Recite in the name of your Lord who has created, Created man out of a germ-cell. Recite for your Lord is the Most Generous one, Who has taught by the pen, Taught man what he did not know!... ” (Qur'an 36:1-5).

“O you wrapped up, Arise and deliver thy warning ...”(Qur'an 74.1-10)

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) returned home after his first revelation his heart trembling and said to Khadijah: *"Wrap me up, wrap me up!"* She wrapped him till fear had left him. He then said: *"O Khadijah! What has happened to me?"* – and he told her what had happened, saying *"fear for myself."* She replied: *"It cannot be. Be happy. I swear by God that he shall never humiliate you. By Allah – you join tie of relationship, you speak the truth, you bear people's burden, you help the destitute, you entertain guests and you help against the vicissitudes which affect people."* Those words of Khadijah were a source of great comfort to him. She was the first person to convert to Islam.

"Say: I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me" (Qur'an 18:110)

As the Prophet continued to receive revelations and attract a community of believers, he also attracted the hostility of Mecca's aristocracy, which reaped profits from the pilgrimages and trade brought by Mecca's role as a center for idol worship. His uncompromising message of monotheism brought persecution from the ruling class.

The second phase, public life began at the end of the 3rd year of his prophethood:

"And warn your nearest kinsfolk, And lower your wing (in kindness) to the believers who follow you, Then if they disobey you, say: I am free (of responsibility) of what you do". (Qur'an 26:215-216)

"Therefore, proclaim (openly) that which you are commanded, and turn away from the polytheists. Verily, we are sufficient unto you against the scoffers, who take with God another god, but they will come to know." (Qur'an 15:94-96)

Mohammad and his followers met active persecution in **Mecca** in the 3rd year of his prophethood and in the 5th year (615 A.D.) oppression intensified and a small group of believers migrated to Abyssinia (today's Ethiopia), a Christian community in Northern Africa. Muslims in Mecca faced boycott, hostility and oppression and struggled for almost 10 years.

On Sept. 16th 622 A.D. Prophet Mohammad and about 200 of his followers migrated to Yathreb (Mohammad was 53), a journey that took 12 days. That is the date of the beginning of Islamic Calendar, "Hijrah" (migration).

Jathreb was an important Jewish farming and trading community 200 miles North of Mecca. After some traders had met Mohammad in Mecca and had become believers they invited the Prophet and his followers Jathreb. A bloody tribal rivalry going on and a truce was desperately needed. After the Prophet's arrival Jathreb was called "Medinat an-Nabi" or short **"Medina"** .

An Islamic model state in Medina was established in the same year (623 A.D.). Prophet Mohammad was disappointed by the rejection of his message by the Jews in Medina. Young

Islam struggled to be accepted there and the believers were harassed and ridiculed by the hypocrites. In Medina, Mohammad and his followers demonstrated the practicality of the new religion's social application by resolving bitter rivalries and tensions among the city's rival groups and clans. Seeing the virtues of Islam in action, many inhabitants of Medina became Muslims.

Through military activity and political negotiation Prophet Mohammed became the most powerful leader in Arabia. Several important battles ensued, the first and biggest one (624 A.D.) in Badr (near Medina). Muslim forces, though greatly outnumbered (more than threefold), defeated the Meccan army. In the battle of Uhud (625 A.D.) Muslims were defeated and Mohammad was also wounded.

Finally in 627 (A.D.) frustrated by the growing strength of the Muslims, the Meccans mounted an all-out siege of Medina. At the battle of "Ditch" (so named because a trench was dug out to fend off the Meccan cavalry) the Muslims successfully held out against a coalition of Meccans and mercenary Bedouins that the coalition disintegrated and the Meccans withdrew. The failure of the Meccan Quraish enhanced the Prophet's prestige and leadership among the tribes of Arabia.

John L. Esposito, quote*: *"The final phase in the struggle between Medina and Mecca highlights the method and political genius of Mohammad. He employed both military and diplomatic means, often preferring the latter. Instead of seeking to rout his Meccan opponents, Mohammad sought to gain submission to God and His messenger by incorporating them within the Islamic community-state. A truce was struck in 628 (A.D.) at Hudaibiyah to permit Muslims to make their pilgrimage to Mecca the following year. In 629 (A.D.) Mohammad established Muslim control over the Hijaz and led the pilgrimage to Mecca as had been scheduled. Then in 630 (A.D.) Mohammad accused the Quraish of breaking the treaty and the Muslims marched on Mecca, ten thousand strong. The Meccans capitulated. Eschewing vengeance and the plunder of conquest the Prophet instead accepted a settlement granting amnesty rather than wielding the sword toward his former enemies."*

It was a triumphant return to Mecca on Ramadan 20th, the 8th year after Hijrah (630 A.D.). Mecca welcomed the Muslims and it converted without violent resistance to Islam. His first act upon returning to Mecca was to cleanse the 'Kaaba' of its pagan idols, restoring it to the Abrahamic tradition of monotheism.

On his last Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) in the 10th year after Hijrah (632 A.D.) Mohammad delivered a farewell speech to his followers.

By that time Arabia was united under the banner of Islam after many battles in its cause. His death – a high fever had befallen him – in Medina came to his followers as a grave shock. Medina fell into despair for days. The city was consumed with sorrow and ceremony. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) wanted to be buried very simple with no marker over his grave. He did not

want people to worship his grave, that would interfere with their worship of God.

He was buried on the very spot where he died, in the house of Lady Aisha. Later a large mosque was built next to it and it is today one of the three most Holy Places of Islam, with Mecca and the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Here was the secret to Islam's strength and profound influence: the unifying power of one God, merciful and compassionate, the power of one people bound by a common faith.

By 750 A.D. Islam had expanded to China, India, along the Southern shore of the Mediterranean and into Spain. By 1550 it had reached Vienna. Wars resulted expelling Muslims from Spain and Europe. Believers are currently concentrated from the West coast of Africa to the Philippines (well over 1 billion believers).

*"It is one of the functions of Islamic Law to protect the privileged status of minorities, and this is why non-Muslim places of worship have flourished all over the Islamic world. History provides many examples of Muslim tolerance towards other faiths: when the Caliph Omar entered Jerusalem in the year 634 A.D., Islam granted freedom of worship to all religious communities in the city. Islamic law also permits non-Muslim minorities to set up their own courts, which implement family laws drawn up by minorities by themselves." ** Quote*

The advent of Islam brought about a social revolution in the Arabian peninsula, as the new religion fought against slavery, the mistreatment of women and other social injustices that had become an accepted way of life. The diversity found among Muslim communities in language, culture, skin color and ethnic origin is a source of pride for Muslims, who believe in the universal and timeless message of Islam.

The Prophet's personality is reported to have been very kind, calm, modest and righteous. As he grew up, in his young adult years he became known for his truthfulness, generosity and sincerity, so that he was sought after for his ability to arbitrate in disputes.... *"Features handsome, middle in height, temperament likeable, long dark and curly hair, large black eyes, a man of grace, captivating at a distance."* He was called *"Al-Ameen"*, *"the trustworthy"*. **He never claimed to be something else than human, a messenger and devoted servant of God.**

The hardships he endured in his early childhood, poor and orphan losing many of his closest relatives at an early age may have formed his character and prepared him to be the Messenger of God.

He was a man of peace. He never took revenge for his own personal self. For example it is reported, that the Prophet would pass by the house of a Jewish woman in Medina every day at the same time. She used to wait for him just so she could throw garbage on him. One day she was not there, so out of concern the Prophet went to ask about her. Upon seeing his thoughtfulness, she felt embarrassed and ashamed and she converted to Islam.

Prophet's wives

This topic is not a problem for the believers knowing the character of the Prophet, but something that is hard to understand for non-Muslims. Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h) has widely been portrayed in the past by orientalist as a lustful man pursuing his lusts and sensuous pleasures, that he was not satisfied with one wife or even four, but married ten or more driven by his desires. **But all his wives were elderly ladies or widows except Lady Aisha, whom the Prophet married when she was still a young maiden and Maria (a slave girl, whom he freed and married).** If the aim had been seeking sexual pleasures, he would have done so in his youth and would have married young maidens, not aged widows.

First we must remember the life in Arabia in the pre-Islamic time. Due to the tribal wars and blood revenge there had always been a large number widows and orphans who had to be taken care of. This must have been the main reason for polygamy in those days. It was the same ancient custom that was practiced in Palestine in the centuries before Jesus (p.b.u.h.).

Most of the twelve marriages had political or social motives. As it was customary for the Arab chiefs, many were political marriages to cement alliances. European and other world rulers married for the same reason for centuries. Others were marriages to the widows of his companions who had fallen in combat and were in need of protection, since traditionally remarriage was difficult for widows.

As I already mentioned **Mohammad was married for 25 years to Khadijah**, a twice-widowed lady 15 years older than him. Their marriage was very happy and they had 6 children (4 girls and 2 boys) together and he remained faithful to her until her death.

After 3 years he married **a young woman Aisha** (p.b.u.h.), with whom he had the closest relationship. The Prophet had spent the prime of his youth with Khadijah. Once Lady Aisha asked the Prophet if Khadijah had been the only woman worthy of his love, he replied in an honest burst of emotion: *“She believed in me when none else did. She embraced Islam when people disbelieved me. She helped and comforted me when there was none else to lend me a helping hand.”*

Aisha was the third lady to enter the house of the Holy Prophet as his wife. She was the lady, who had the second strongest influence on the Prophet’s private and family life. She was the daughter of his lifelong friend and companion Abu Bakr, who succeeded him as ruler of the Islamic state. Aisha was the most intelligent and the most versed in religion among the *“Mothers of the Faithful”*; she was even more knowledgeable than the companions. Many of the companions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) used to ask her questions regarding religion.

After the death of his first wife Khadijah (65 at the time, p.b.u.h.) the Prophet (at the age of 50) desperately needed a companion. Young Islam was struggling in Mecca and in the same year the Prophet lost also his beloved uncle Abu Talib, who had taken care of him as a child. A woman close to him, Khawlah Bint-Hakeem (wife of one of the Prophet’s early companions) suggested Aisha, if he wishes to marry a young virgin. She was the daughter of his lifelong friend. But if he preferred a more mature woman, there was **Sawdah (bint Zama’a), the widow of Al Sakran**

31 **ibn Amr Al Ansari**, an emigrant to Abyssinia in the early years of persecution in Mecca, who died on their way back home. Sawdah turned to the Prophet himself for shelter since her husband had died in the cause of Islam. The Prophet gave her shelter and married her. She was not young (55 years old) nor pretty with a quick and loose temper as it is reported (in the Hadith's she is described to have been "*a fat huge lady*" and "*a tall lady*"). Soon afterwards he married Lady Aisha.

Later after 5 or 6 years he married widows of his companions, also two women war captives as they were integrated in the Muslim society through legal marriages with the believers. Although the Prophet loved Aisha so much, he treated her in the same way as the rest of his wives. The Prophet referred to her as "*the mother of the believers*". Aisha was also a fine scholar of Arabic and good orator. When she needed to make speeches, particularly after the assassination of Uthman, the third Khalif, her speeches were of superb literary quality. She was a scholar of broad knowledge and great ability. Lady Aisha died (p.b.u.h.) at the age of 58 without having any children.

In some sources it is asserted that Lady Aisha was a child when she married the Prophet.

At that time no official birth records existed in Mecca and they did not even have a recognized calendar. They knew that a year is composed of 12 lunar months, each lasting 29 or 30 days, and they dated matters on the basis of major events in their community. Hence, their dating was considerably lacking in accuracy.

In one Hadith (probably the only one) it is suggested that Aisha was only six or seven at the time of her marriage. It is illogical to assert that Khawlah would have suggested a child as a companion for the Prophet, Aisha must have been of marriageable age. Anyway, the marriage took place after 3 years in Medina (after it was first suggested by Khawlah and after the marriage to Sawdah).

More evidence is provided also by one of the earliest authors of Islam, Ibn Ishaq, who writes, that Aisha and her elder sister Asmaa were among the first 80 people in Mecca, who accepted the Prophets call to Islam. He adds as he mentions Aisha, that she was then a young girl. But how old can she have been then? Old enough to be mentioned among the people, who had taken an important step adopting a new religion. Maybe 10 or so? (Adil Salahi: Muhammad, Man and Prophet)

We know, that the time between the first revelation of the Prophet and the migration to Medina (where the marriage to Aisha took place) were thirteen years. So we can say that **even if Aisha was only a newborn baby when she became Muslim, she must have been at least fourteen years old at the time of her marriage.** The Prophets daughter Fatimah (p.b.u.them) was born when he was 35 years old, meaning that at the time of the marriage to Aisha in Medina **she would have been 17 or 18 years old.**

According to another account (by Ibn Hajar) his daughter Fatimah was 5 years older than Aisha,

32 meaning that by no means she could not have been younger than 15 or 16 years old at the time of her marriage. How can we believe that the Prophet would have married a girl of 6 years of age, even a girl of 9 years? The whole assertion about the Prophet marrying a six- or nine-year-old child is highly questionable.

It is amazing how the question of Aisha's age comes up so very often. However, if we regard the sources (the Hadiths) 100% reliable we should also i.e. unconditionally accept the fact that Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) did cause the moon to split into two.

If anybody of my readers have any other evidence concerning this theme I would appreciate it if you would share it with me. Knowing the circumstances and the character of the Prophet in all other aspects and that he was a father of girls himself and remembering the fact that Aisha was the daughter of his lifelong companion, it can be taken for granted (in my opinion) that she was of marriageable age. It is hard to imagine that the Prophet, who strived to be an example to his followers, would have done such a thing knowing that the believers were encouraged by the Qur'an to follow his example in all aspects. What an uproar it would have caused, in his own family and in the community! I think we would have much more evidence in the Hadith's about it.

There is no real evidence for that kind of assertion. The only evidence comes from Hadith's (Hadith's = reports about the lifetime of the Prophet, collections dated ca. 250-300 years later). Also in Islam religious duties (like fasting, praying etc.) become obligatory only after a girl reaches puberty. Why should it be otherwise in marriage, a much graver aspect of life?

Islam introduced the right of a girl to choose her husband, a suitable husband can only be suggested by parents or guardians. Until today it was and still is common practice in Arab countries that marriage becomes a matter of discussion only after a girl reaches puberty. As far as I know in Pakistan and India child marriages were common in the past but are banned today by civil law.

Two highly reliable Hadith's (Muslim): *"Abu Hurairah reports that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: 'A grown-up girl shall be asked permission about herself. If she is silent, it is her permission; and if she declines, there shall be no compulsion on her.'"*

A report from Ibn Abbas states that: *"the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: 'A previously married woman is more a guardian for herself than her guardian and a virgin should be asked permission about herself, and her permission is her silence.'"*

Many Hadith's are narrated by Aisha herself about her marriage in general. In one of them she claims, that (according to the Prophet himself) she was the only virgin among the wives of the Prophet.

The only child from all his wives after his first wife Khadijah was born to a Coptic Christian

33 servant girl Maria, whom he married as she was presented to him as a gift from an Egyptian ruler – a son who died in infancy. All other wives remained childless.

The fact that the Prophet did not have more children later on is an indication, that his marriages were more of a sociopolitical nature, to ensure peace between the tribes of Arabia after they were united under Islam.

“There were many war prisoners captured by the Muslims and entitled to security and protection. They were not killed or denied any human or physical rights. On the contrary, they were helped to settle down through legal marriages to Muslims instead of being taken concubines and common mistresses. That also was another moral burden on Muslims and had to be shouldered jointly as a common responsibility. Here, again, Mohammad carried his share and took some responsibilities by marrying two of those captivities... The Prophet married some women for sociopolitical reasons. His principal concern was the future of Islam. He was most interested in strengthening the Muslims by all bonds. That is why he married the daughter (Aisha) of Abu Bakr, his first successor, and the daughter of Umar, his second successor. It was by his marriage to Juwairiyah that he gained the support for Islam of the whole clan of Bani Al-Mustalew and all their allied tribes. It was by marrying Safiyah that he neutralized a great section of the hostile Jews of Arabia. By accepting Mary the Copt from Egypt as his wife, he formed a political alliance with a king of great magnitude. It was also a gesture of friendship with a neighboring king that Mohammad married Zaynap who was presented to him by the Negus of Abyssinia (today's Ethiopia) where many early Muslims found refuge. By most of these marriages, the Prophet meant to eliminate the caste system, the racial and national vanities, and the religious prejudices... ” (c. Hamouda Abdul Aati, ‘Islam in Focus’)

Qur'an 33:32 : “O wives of the Prophet! you are not like any other of the women; If you will be on your guard, then be not soft in (your) speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease yearn; and speak a good word.”

In Islam the number of wives for the believers was reduced to four. This was an unheard progress for the rights of women after centuries of unlimited polygamy. The Qur'an does not advocate polygamy, in the contrary it says :

“... then marry such women as may seem good to you, two, three or four. If you feel that you will not act justly, then one.” (Qur'an 4:3)

“You will never manage to deal equitably with women no matter how hard you try” (Qur'an 4:129).

Since equal treatment according to these two verses of the Qur'an is a practical impossibility, we understand that Islam prefers monogamy. Here, like concerning some other issues (i.e. slavery) Islam made concessions to prevailing social practices of that time.

This is a Hadith which makes us smile, and the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) appear very human to us,

narrated by Lady Aisha: *“Allah’s messenger was fond of honey and sweet edible things and it was his habit that after finishing the ‘Asr’ (afternoon) prayer he would visit his wives and stay with one of them at that time. Once he went to Hafsa, the daughter of Omar and stayed with her more than usual. I got jealous and asked for the reason for that. I was told that a lady in her folk had given her a skin filled with honey as a present, and that she made a syrup from it and gave it to the prophet to drink (and that was the reason for the delay). I said, ‘By Allah, we will play a trick on him (to prevent him delaying so).’ So I said to Sawdah bint Zam’ah, ‘The Prophet will approach you, and when he comes near you, say: ‘Have you taken Maghafir (=a bad-smelling gum)? He will say: ‘No’. Then say to him: ‘Then what is this bad smell which I smell on you?’ He will say to you, ‘Hafsa made me drink honey syrup.’ Then say: ‘Perhaps the bees of that honey had sucked the juice of the tree of Al-Urfut.’ I shall also say the same. O you, Safiya, say the same.’ Later Sawdah said: ‘By Allah, as soon as he (the Prophet) stood at the door, I was about to say to him what you had ordered me to say because I was afraid of you.’ So when the Prophet came near Sawdah, she said to him: ‘O Allah’s messenger! Have you taken Maghafir?’ He said: ‘No.’ She said: ‘Then what is this bad smell I detect on you?’ He said: ‘Hafsa made me drink honey syrup.’ She said: ‘Perhaps its bees had sucked the juice of Al-Urfut tree.’ When he came to me, I also said the same, and when he went to Safiya, she also said the same. And when the Prophet again went to Hafsa, she said: ‘O Allah’s messenger! Shall I give you more of that drink?’ He said: ‘I am not in need of it.’ Sawdah said: ‘By Allah we have deprived him (of it).’ I said to her: ‘Keep quiet!’.”*

Because this theme being such a controversial topic I include some quotes from Ayesha’s Age

“According to a narrative reported by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, after the death of Khadijah (ra), when Khaulah (ra) came to the Prophet (pbuh) advising him to marry again, the Prophet (pbuh) asked her regarding the choices she had in her mind. Khaulah said: “You can marry a virgin (bikr) or a woman who has already been married (thayyib)”. When the Prophet (pbuh) asked about who the virgin was, Khaulah proposed Ayesha’s (ra) name. All those who know the Arabic language, are aware that the word “bikr” in the Arabic language is not used for an immature nine year old girl. The correct word for a young playful girl, as stated earlier is “Jariyah”. “Bikr” on the other hand, is used for an unmarried lady, and obviously a nine year old is not a “lady”. ”

“According to the generally accepted tradition, Ayesha (ra) was born about eight years before Hijrah. But according to another narrative in Bukhari (kitabul-tafseer) Ayesha (ra) is reported to have said that at the time Surah Al-Qamar, the 54th chapter of the Qur’an, was revealed, “I was a young girl”. The 54th surah of the Qur’an was revealed nine years before Hijrah. According to this tradition, Ayesha (ra) had not only been born before the revelation of the referred surah, but was actually a young girl (jariyah), not an infant (sibyah) at that time. Obviously, if this narrative is held to be true, it is in clear contradiction with the narratives reported by Hisham ibn `urwah. I see absolutely no reason that after the comments of the experts on the narratives of Hisham ibn `urwah, why we should not accept this narrative to be more accurate.”

“According to almost all the historians Asma (ra), the elder sister of Ayesha (ra) was ten years older than Ayesha (ra). It is reported in Taqri’bu’l-tehzi’b as well as Al-bidayah wa’l-nihayah

that Asma (ra) died in 73 hijrah when she was 100 years old. Now, obviously if Asma (ra) was 100 years old in 73 hijrah she should have been 27 or 28 years old at the time of hijrah. If Asma (ra) was 27 or 28 years old at the time of hijrah, Ayesha (ra) should have been 17 or 18 years old at that time. Thus, Ayesha (ra), if she got married in 1 AH (after hijrah) or 2 AH, was between 18 to 20 years old at the time of her marriage.”

“According to a number of narratives, Ayesha (ra) accompanied the Muslims in the battle of Badr and Uhud. Furthermore, it is also reported in books of hadith and history that no one under the age of 15 years was allowed to take part in the battle of Uhud. All the boys below 15 years of age were sent back. Ayesha’s (ra) participation in the battle of Badr and Uhud clearly indicate that she was not nine or ten years old at that time. After all, women used to accompany men to the battle fields to help them, not to be a burden on them.”

“Tabari in his treatise on Islamic history, while mentioning Abu Bakr (ra) reports that Abu Bakr had four children and all four were born during the Jahiliyyah — the pre Islamic period. Obviously, if Ayesha (ra) was born in the period of jahiliyyah, she could not have been less than 14 years in 1 AH — the time she most likely got married.”

“According to Ibn Hisham, the historian, Ayesha (ra) accepted Islam quite some time before Umar ibn al-Khattab (ra). This shows that Ayesha (ra) accepted Islam during the first year of Islam. While, if the narrative of Ayesha’s (ra) marriage at seven years of age is held to be true, Ayesha (ra) should not have been born during the first year of Islam.”

“Tabari has also reported that at the time Abu Bakr planned on migrating to Habshah (8 years before Hijrah), he went to Mut`am — with whose son Ayesha (ra) was engaged — and asked him to take Ayesha (ra) in his house as his son’s wife. Mut`am refused, because Abu Bakr had embraced Islam, and subsequently his son divorced Ayesha (ra). Now, if Ayesha (ra) was only seven years old at the time of her marriage, she could not have been born at the time Abu Bakr decided on migrating to Habshah. On the basis of this report it seems only reasonable to assume that Ayesha (ra) had not only been born 8 years before hijrah, but was also a young lady, quite prepared for marriage.”

“According to Ibn Hajar, Fatimah (ra) was five years older than Ayesha (ra). Fatimah (ra) is reported to have been born when the Prophet (pbuh) was 35 years old. Thus, even if this information is taken to be correct, Ayesha (ra) could by no means be less than 14 years old at the time of hijrah, and 15 or 16 years old at the time of her marriage.”

“In my opinion, neither was it an Arab tradition to give away girls in marriage at an age as young as nine or ten years, nor did the Prophet (pbuh) marry Ayesha (ra) at such a young age. The people of Arabia did not object to this marriage, because it never happened in the manner it has been narrated.” (c. Adil Salahi, “Muhammad, Man and Prophet”)

The wives of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.): **Khadijah bint Khuwaylid** (p.b.u.h.), twice widowed lady, 40 years old at the time of their marriage (the Prophet was 25 years old).

Sawdah bint Zama’a (p.b.u.h.), 55 years old (the Prophet was 50), the widow of Al Sakran ibn Amr Al Ansari

Aisha bint Abu Bakr (p.b.u.h.), age most probably late teens/early twenties, the daughter of his devoted friend and lifelong companion Abu Bakr. She died at the age of 58 without having any children.

Hafsah bint Omar (p.b.u.h.) a widow, whose husband Khanis ibn Huthafah was a martyr in the battle of Badr.

Zainab bint Khuzaimah (p.b.u.h.), the widow of Obidah ibn Al Hareth ibn Abd Al Muttalib, a martyr in the battle of Badr. She continued nursing the wounded unaffected by the martyrdom of her husband. When the Prophet heard of her patience and steadfastness and that no one supported her, he proposed to marry her. She was 60 years old and had two more years to live before she died at 62.

Zainab bint Jahsh (p.b.u.h.), a divorced woman who had been married to Zaid ibn Haritha. The Prophet knew Zainab since his childhood; she was his cousin. She was previously married to Zaid Ibn Haritha ibn Sharaheel but their marriage did not last long. She ill-treated him as she felt socially superior to him as he had been just a slave before the Prophet adopted him and she herself was of a great ancestral line. Zaid divorced her and Prophet Mohammad married her to annul the custom of adoption, to set up the principles of Islam and to destroy the pre-Islamic practices completely. The prophet (p.b.u.h.) feared the hypocrites and the slanderers would say that Mohammad married his “son’s” divorced wife. In this way the pre-Islamic custom of adoption came to an end and the Holy Qur’an supported this new divine legislation saying: *“Mohammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of God, and the seal of the prophets; And God has full knowledge of all things.”* (Qur’an 33: 40) Al Bukhari (Hadiths) mentions that Zainab said boastfully to the other wives of the Prophet: *“Your families have married you, but it is only me that God from over seven Heavens has decreed my marriage.”*

Hind Al Makhzoumiah (Umm Salama), the widow of Abd Allah ibn Abdel Asad who had been one of the first people to embrace Islam. He migrated with his family to Ethiopia where Salama was born. He was a martyr in the battle of Uhud and left four helpless orphans. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) saw no better solution than to ask her hand to support her and her children. She (p.b.u.h.) apologized to him saying: *“I am an aged mother of orphans and I have much jealousy”*.

Ramlah Bint Abu Sufian (Umm Habibah), the widow of the Ubaid Allah ibn Jahsh who had died in Ethiopia. Her father Abu Sufian was at that time the leader of the disbelievers and a strong enemy of the Prophet. She embraced Islam in Makkah and migrated to Ethiopia with her husband. When the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) knew of her husband’s death in Ethiopia, he sent to the

37 King of Ethiopia, Al Najashi, to marry him Umm Habibah. She was extremely pleased because if she had returned to her father in Mecca he would have forced her to forsake Islam . When she returned to Madina the Prophet married her. Later her father Abu Suffian embraced Islam and knew of her marriage to the Prophet, consented to it and boasted of the Prophet being a good match to his daughter. The prophet's marriage to the daughter of Abu Suffian led to the lessening of enmity against the Muslims.

Juwyrriah bint Al Hareth, the daughter of Al Hareth, the leader of the tribe of Bani Al Mustalaqthe and the widow of Musafei ibn Dhirar, one of the strongest enemies of Islam who had been killed in the battle of Al Muraysei. She together with the whole tribe, had been taken war prisoners by the Muslims in one of the Prophet's battles. She, as the daughter of the tribe's leader came to the Prophet to ask for money to pay as a ransom to be set free. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) offered to pay the ransom for her and marry her. The Muslims thought it was not becoming to keep the Prophet's in-laws prisoners of war, and set them all free. Seeing the Muslim's noble-mindedness, the whole tribe of Bani Al Mustalaq embraced Islam.

Saffiah bint Huyay ibn Akhtab (p.b.u.h.). After the Battle of Khybar (a Jewish community) Saffiah, the daughter of Huyay ibn Akhtab was captivated by the Muslims after her husband had been killed. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) gave her the choice, either to set her free and he would marry her or to set her free and she would return to her Jewish family. Seeing the Prophet's nobleness of character, decency and gentlemanliness, she chose to be set free and be his wife. Moreover, she, as well as many people with her, embraced Islam. It is narrated that when the Messenger (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told Saffiah that her father was most antagonistic among the Jews against him, she answered, "O Messenger of Allah! Allah says in His Holy Book: "... *no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another* " (Qur'an 6:164) **Maria**, a Coptic-Christian slave girl whom he manumitted and married as she was presented to him as a gift by an Egyptian ruler and who bore the Prophet the only child after his first wife Khadijah, a son Ibrahim who died in infancy.

Maymouna bint Al Hareth (p.b.u.h.), the widow of Abi Rahan ibn Abdul Uzza. Her name had been Barraah, the Prophet named her Maymouna, she was the last of his wives. Lady Aisha said of her that she was one of those who most fear God the Almighty and of those who always join ties of relationship.

* "Islam, the straight Path", Prof. John L. Esposito

What Did Muhammad Say?

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught many important principles and morals, and even set forth rules for combat setting the precedent and still exceeding the rules of war set forth by the Geneva Convention.

Consider the following:

All innocent life was sacred and as such none could be harmed, except those who were engaged against them in active combat. Saving one life was as if one had saved the entire world, while taking an innocent life was as if one had taken the lives of the entire world.

There was to be no genocide of any tribes even up until some had committed genocide against

38 some Muslims. He offered mutual protection and forgiveness to the all even after certain ones broke their covenants with him many times. He did not allow them to be attacked until it was clearly proven they were traitors during time of war and tried to bring down the prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Muslims at any cost. Retaliation was only to those Jews who had turned traitor and not others.

Slaves were common in those days for all nations and tribes. It was Islam that encouraged freeing of the slaves and the great reward from Allah for those who did so. Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the example of this by freeing slaves and encouraging all of his followers to do the same. Examples include his own servant (who was actually considered like a son to him) Zaid ibn Al Haritha and Bilal the slave who was bought by Abu Bakr only for the purpose of freeing him.

While there were many attempts of assassination made on Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, (most famous was the night that Ali took his place in bed while he and Abu Bakr escaped to Madinah), he did not allow his companions to slaughter any of those who had been involved in these attempts. Proof for this is when they entered Makkah triumphantly and his first words were to command his followers not to harm such and such tribes and so and so families. This was one of the most famous of his acts of forgiveness and humbleness.

Military combat was forbidden for the first thirteen years of prophet hood. The desert Arabs did not need anyone to tell them how to fight or do combat. They were experts in this area and held feuds amongst tribes that lasted for decades. It was not until the proper method of warfare was instituted by Allah in the Quran, with proper rights and limitations according His Commandments, that any retaliation or combat was sanctioned. Orders from Allah made it clear who was to be attacked, how and when and to what extent fighting could take place.

Destruction of infrastructures is absolutely forbidden except when it is ordained by Allah in certain instances and then only according to His Commands.

Cursing and invoking evil actually came to the prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, from his enemies, while he would be praying for their guidance. Classic example is that of his journey to At-Taif where the leaders would not even hear him out nor offer so much as the normal courtesy called for and instead they set the children of the street against him, throwing rocks and stones at him until his body was bleeding so much, blood filled his sandals. He was offered revenge by the angel Gabriel, if he would give the command, Allah would cause the surrounding mountains to fall down upon them destroying them all. Instead of cursing them or asking for their destruction, he prayed for them to be guided to worship their Lord alone, without any partners.

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, claimed every person who is born is born in a state of ISLAM (submission to God on His Terms in Peace), as a Muslim (MU-Islam means; "one who does ISLAM" i.e.; submits to God's Will and obeys His Commandments). He further stated, God has created each person in the image that is His according to His plan, and their spirit is His. Then as they grow older they begin to distort their faith according to the influence of the prevailing society and their own prejudices.

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught his followers to believe in the God of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus, peace be upon them all, and to believe in them as true prophets, messengers and servants of Almighty Allah. He insisted on ranking all the prophets up at the highest level without any distinction between them, and ordered his followers to say the words, "peace and blessings be upon him" after mentioning their names.

39 He also taught the Torah (Old Testament), Zabur (Psalms) and Enjil (Gospel or New Testament) were originally from the very same source as the Quran, from Allah to the angel Gabriel. He asked the Jews to judge according to their own Book, and they tried to cover up some of it to hide the correct judgment, knowing he, peace and blessings be upon him, could not read. He prophesied, predicted and foretold of events to come and they happened just as he had said they would. He mentioned so many things that people of his time could not have known, yet we have seen the evidences manifest over and over throughout the centuries in science, medicine, biology, embryology, psychology, metrology, geology and many other disciplines and even space travel and wireless communications, all of which we take for granted today. He even predicted something from the past that would come true in the future, and it has..

The Quran states pharaoh was drowned in the Red Sea while chasing after Moses and Allah said He would preserve Pharaoh as a sign for the future. Dr. Maurice Bucaille in his book, "Bible, Quran and Science" makes it clear this has happened and the very person of Pharaoh has been discovered in Egypt and is now on display for all to see. This event took place thousands of years before Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and it came true in the last few decades, many centuries after his death.

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or his followers never at any time claimed that he was a son of God or the God-incarnate or a man with divinity – but he always was and is even today considered as only a Messenger chosen by God. He insisted people praise Almighty God, alone and not to celebrate him or his companions in any way. While most people do not hesitate to raise to divinity and even make 'gods' out of other individuals whose lives and missions have been lost in legend. Historically speaking, none of these legends achieved even a fraction of what Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, accomplished.

Uniting mankind together for the purpose of worshipping the One God of Adam and all the other prophets, peace be upon them all, was his main motivating cause and his striving was for the sole purpose having everyone to understand and follow the codes of moral excellence set forth by Allah in His Revelations.

Today after a lapse of fourteen centuries, the life and teachings of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, have survived without the slightest loss, alteration or interpolation. They offer the same undying hope for treating mankind's many ills, which they did when he was alive. This is not a claim of Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, followers, but the inescapable conclusion forced upon by a critical and unbiased history.

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, claimed to be a servant, messenger and prophet of the Almighty God; the same God of Adam, Abraham, Moses, David and Solomon and of Jesus, the Christ, son of Mary (peace be upon them all). He claimed he was receiving revelation from Almighty God (Allah) through the Arch Angel Gabriel, calling it the Recitation (Quran).

He ordered people to believe in God as One, without partners, and to follow the Commandments of Almighty God to the best of their abilities.

He forbade himself and his followers from evil practices and filthy habits, showing them the proper ways to eat, drink, use the toilet and proper behavior in all relationships. This he claimed was all from Allah.

What Did He Do?

Almost everyone on the earth today is discussing Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. People want to know, "Who was he exactly?" "What did he teach?" "Why was he loved so much by some and hated so much by others?" "Did he live up to his claims?" "Was he a holy

40 man?" "Was he a prophet of God?" "What is the truth about this man - Muhammad?"
How can we discover the truth and be totally honest in our judgment?

We will begin with the very simple historical evidences, facts as narrated by thousands of people, many of whom knew him personally. The following is based on books, manuscripts, texts and actual eyewitness accounts, too numerous list herein, yet all have been preserved in original form throughout the centuries by both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Muhammad ibn (son of) Abdullah ibn (son of) Abdul Motalib, was born in the year 570 C.E. (Christian Era) in Makkah, Felix Arabia (today: Saudi Arabia) and he died in 633 C.E. in Yathrib (today: Madinah, Saudi Arabia).

A. His names: When he was born, his grandfather, Abdul Motalib, gave him the name Muhammad. And it means "praised one" or "praising one." He was later called "As-Saddiq" (the Truthful) by all of those who knew of his truthful and honest nature. He always said only the truth. He was also called "Al-Amin" (the Trustworthy) due to his integrity and always upholding any trust given to him. When the tribes were battling against each other, both sides would entrust him with their possessions during the fighting, even if it might be against some of his own tribesmen, because they knew he would always uphold any trust given to him. All of his names indicated the very nature of a man who was praised for his honesty, integrity and trustworthiness. He was also well known for advocating the reconciliation of kinship and relationships. He ordered his followers to always honor the "ties of the wombs" (siblings and other close relatives).

This fits right in with the prophecy mentioned in the Bible in the Book of John in chapters 14 and 16, as the coming of a prophet known as the "Spirit of Truth" or "Comforter" or "Advocate."

B. Born as a descendent of Abraham, peace and blessings be upon him, through his first born son, Ishmael (Ismail in Arabic), peace and blessings be upon him, to the noble tribe of the Quraish who were the leaders of Makkah in those days. Muhammad's blood line traces directly back to Abraham, peace and blessings be upon him.

This could certainly point to fulfillment of Old Testament (Torah) prophecies in Deuteronomy (chapter 18:15) of a prophet, like unto Moses from "their brethren."

C. He kept the Commandments of Almighty God, just as his great grandfathers and prophets of old had done in the past (peace be upon them). Here is a statement from Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while the Quran was being revealed to him by the angel Gabriel;



"Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your PARENTS; do not kill your children because of poverty - (Allah) provide sustenance for you and for them; do not come near to Al-Fawahish (shameful sins, illegal sexual intercourse, etc.) whether committed openly or secretly, and kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause. This He has commanded you that you may understand."

D. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, lived in total commitment to his Belief in One God, and as such, he worshipped God alone, without any other "gods" beside Him. This is the very first commandment in the Old Testament (Exodus chapter 20 and Deuteronomy, chapter 5) and in the New Testament as well (Mark, chapter 12, verse 29).

E. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered his followers to obey Allah Almighty. He ordered following the Commandments as were revealed to him by the angel Gabriel from Almighty Allah. Read below, one of many similar statements from the Quran:



Surely, Allah Commands absolute justice and steadfast commitment to performing your duties to Almighty Allah, in total sincerity and giving help to relatives; and He forbids evil, and disobedience and all that is prohibited by Allah (such as; illegal sexual acts, disobedience of PARENTS, polytheism, to tell lies, to give false witness, to kill a life without right, etc.), and (He Forbids) any evil (i.e. all that is prohibited by God's Law, such as: polytheism of every kind, disbelief and every kind of evil deeds, etc.), and all kinds of oppression, He admonishes you, that you may take heed.

[Holy Quran 16:90]

F. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never fell into the common practice of his tribesmen to worship statues, idols or man-made "gods." He forbid his followers to ever engage in worship outside of the One True God (Allah) of Adam, Abraham, Moses and all the prophets, peace be upon them all.



And the people of the Scripture Jews and Christians did not differed amongst themselves until after there came to them clear evidence.



And they were commanded only to worship Allah, and worship none but Him Alone (no gods beside God), and perform prayers and give charity: and that is the right religion.

[Holy Quran 98:4-5]

42 He despised false worship to any man-made gods or images or anything in creation as a god. He hated all of the complexities and degradation to which it leads.

This is in direct obedience to the second commandment in the above mentioned verses, "Thou shalt not make any graven images."

G. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, always held the Name of God (Allah) in the highest of reverence and never took God's Name in vain or for any vainglorious purpose.

He forbid his followers for ever doing anything like this and encouraged them to use names such as "Servant of Almighty God" (Abdullah).

H. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, upheld the proper worship and ceremonies of his grandfathers, Abraham and Ishmael, peace be upon them. Here is something from the second chapter of the Quran. Read closely;



"Recall when Abraham's Lord (Allah) tested him with Commands, that he fulfilled. Allah said, 'Surely, I am going to make you a leader (prophet) of mankind. (Abraham said) 'And my offspring, too.' (Allah) said, 'My Covenant (prophethood, etc.) does not include wrong-doers (thalimun)."



"And recall when (Allah) made the House (ka'bah in Bakkah, which later was called 'Makkah') a place of resort for mankind and a place of safety. And it is your place of prayer, and (Allah) commanded Abraham and Ishmael to purify (God's House at Makkah) for those who are circling it, or staying there or bowing or prostrating themselves (there, in worship).



"And when Abraham said, 'My Lord, make this city (Makkah) a place of security and provide its people with fruits, for them that believe in Allah Almighty and the Last Day.' (Allah) answered, 'As for him who doesn't believe, I shall leave him in contentment for a while, then I shall compel him to the torment of the Fire, and worst indeed is that destination!'"



"And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the Sacred House (Ka'bah in Makkah), saying, 'Our Lord! Accept from us. Certainly! You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.'"



"Our Lord! And make us submissive unto You and of our offspring a nation submissive

43 unto You, and show us our Manasik (all the ceremonies of pilgrimage - Hajj and 'Umrah, etc.), and accept our repentance. Truly, You are the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.



"Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own (and indeed Allah answered by sending Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him), who shall recite unto them Your Verses and instruct them in the Book (this Quran) and full knowledge of (Allah's) Laws and jurisprudence, and sanctify them. Verily! You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."



And who turns away from the religion of Abraham (Monotheism) except him who fools himself? Truly, (Allah) chose him in this world and verily, in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous.



When his Lord said to him, "Submit ("Islam" means "submission")!" He said, "I have submitted myself ("Muslim" means "one who submits") to the Lord of all that exists."



And this (submission to Allah) was ordered by Abraham upon his sons and by Jacob; saying, "O my sons! Allah has chosen for you the (true) religion; then die not except in the Faith of Submission (like those in true submission to God's Will)."

[Holy Quran 2:124-132]

I. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, performed these same ceremonies in worship to what we find the prophets doing before him, bowing to toward the ground and prostrating (falling on the face) while praying and worshipping. He would face Jerusalem for his devotionals and commanded his followers to do the same (until Allah sent down the angel Gabriel with revelation to change the direction (Qiblah) mentioned in Quran).

J. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advocated rights for all members of the family and especially ties to the parents, both mother and father, also rights for infant girls, orphaned girls and certainly for wives, as well.

It is known from the Quran, Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered his followers to be kind and respectful to their parents. They were told not to even say, "Ooh" to them while caring for them in their old age. Read from the Quran:



44 *And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor.*

[Holy Quran 17:23]

K. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the defender of the orphans and even the newborn children. He ordered the care of orphans and feeding of the poor as the means to enter Paradise and if anyone held back the rights of those who were destitute, they could forget about ever seeing Paradise. He also forbade the killing of new born girls, as was a custom of ignorance according to primitive Arab traditions. This is referred to in the Quran; when, on the Day of Judgment those who practiced the evil deed of terminating the life of their own infant daughters, will have it exposed, the Quran says:



"And when the female (infant) buried alive (as the pagan Arabs used to do) is going to be asked; about what sin could she (as an infant) have possibly committed."

[Holy Quran 81:8]



Those who spend their wealth (in Allah's Cause) by night and day, in secret and in public, they shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

[Holy Quran 2:274]

L. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered men not to "inherit women against their will," and not to marry them accept by mutual consent and never to touch their wealth or inheritance in order to improve their own financial conditions.



O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and you should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the Mahr you have given them, unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse. And live with them honorably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good.

[Holy Quran 4:19]

We also notice from this verse, He forbid the common practice of wife-beating and abuse, (his own wife said he never once hit her).

He never once engaged in sex outside of marriage, nor did he ever approve of it, even though it was very common at the time. His only relationships with women were in legitimate, contractual marriages with proper witnesses according to law. His relationship to Ayesha was only that of marriage. He did not marry her the first time her father offered her hand to him in marriage. He married her only after she reached the age of puberty and could decide for herself. Their relationship is described in every detail by Ayesha herself in the most loving and respectful manner as a match truly made in heaven. Ayesha is considered as one of the highest scholars of Islam and lived out her entire life only having been married to Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. She never desired any other man, nor did she ever utter a single negative statement against Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

M. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered men to "provide and protect" women, whether it was their own mother, sister, wife or daughter or even those of others, whether they were Muslims or not.



"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support the women) from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands), and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband's property, etc.).

As to those women on whose part you see illconduct, admonish them, refuse to share their beds, startle them (set forth a clear example or parable for them, to make clear the point of what is going on before divorcing them) so if they return to proper obedience (to Allah and their husbands), do not annoy them any further. Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great."

[Holy Quran 4:34]

N. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prohibited killing of children for fear of poverty and also forbade killing any innocent people.



Say (O Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him): "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents; kill not your children because of poverty - We provide sustenance for you and for them; come not near to Al-Fawahish (shameful sins, illegal sexual intercourse, etc.) whether committed openly or secretly, and kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause (according to Law). This He has commanded you that you may understand.

[Holy Quran 6:151]

46 **O.** Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never committed adultery, and he required his followers to engage only in lawful marriage relationships with women, and forbid sex outside of Almighty God's Ordinance.



Satan (the devil) threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahsha (evil deeds, illegal sexual intercourse, sins etc.); whereas Allah promises you Forgiveness from Himself and Bounty, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.

[Holy Quran 2:268]



Say (O Muhammad SAW): "(But) the things that my Lord has indeed forbidden are Al-Fawahish (great evil sins, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.) whether committed openly or secretly, sins (of all kinds), unrighteous oppression, joining partners (in worship) with Allah for which He has given no authority, and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge."

[Holy Quran 7:33]



And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is a Fahishah [i.e. anything that transgresses its limits (a great sin)], and an evil way (that leads one to Hell unless Allah forgives him).

[Holy Quran 17:32]



The adulterer marries not but an adulteress or a Mushrikah and the adulteress none marries her except an adulterer or a Muskrik [and that means that the man who agrees to marry (have a sexual relation with) a Mushrikah (female polytheist, pagan or idolatress) or a prostitute, then surely he is either an adulterer, or a Mushrik (polytheist, pagan or idolater, etc.) And the woman who agrees to marry (have a sexual relation with) a Mushrik (polytheist, pagan or idolater) or an adulterer, then she is either a prostitute or a Mushrikah (female polytheist, pagan, or idolatress, etc.)]. Such a thing is forbidden to the believers (of Islamic Monotheism).

[Holy Quran 24:3]



Verily, those who like that (the crime of) illegal sexual intercourse should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you know not.

[Holy Quran 24:19]



O Prophet! When believing women come to you to give you the pledge, that they will not associate anything in worship with Allah, that they will not steal, that they will not commit illegal sexual intercourse, that they will not kill their children, that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood (i.e. by making illegal children belonging to their husbands), and that they will not disobey you in any Ma'ruf (Islamic Monotheism and all that which Islam ordains) then accept their Bai'a (pledge), and ask Allah to forgive them, Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

[Holy Quran 60:12]

People committed fornication and adultery in most places around the world in Muhammad's time, yet he never once did so, and he forbade all of his followers from this evil practice.

P. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade usury and interest on money lending, as Jesus, peace and blessings be upon him, had done centuries before him. It can be easily shown how usury eats away at wealth and destroys the economic systems throughout history. Yet, just as in the teachings of the prophets of old, Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, held that such practices were most evil and must be avoided in order to be at peace with the Creator (Allah).



Those who eat usury (deal in interest) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Satan leading him to insanity. That is because they say: "Trading is only like usury," whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden usury. So whosoever receives an admonition from his Lord and stops eating usury shall not be punished for the past; his case is for Allah (to judge); but whoever returns to dealing in usury, such are the dwellers of the Fire - they will abide therein.



Allah will destroy Riba (usury) and will give increase for charity, alms, etc. And Allah



Truly those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and perform Salat, and give Zakat, they will have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.



You who believe! Be afraid of Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from usury, if you are believers.



And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger but if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Deal not unjustly, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly.

[Holy Quran 2:275-279]

Q. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never gambled and did not allow it. Like usury, gambling takes away wealth but at an even faster pace.



"People ask you (Muhammad) about alcohol and gambling. Say, 'There is great sin in both of them and (some benefit) for humans, but the sin is greater than any benefit from them.' And they ask you what they should spend (for charity, etc.). Say, 'Whatever is above your basic needs.' So, Allah makes it clear to you His Laws in order for you to give thought."

[Holy Quran 2:219]

Gambling had not been viewed as so evil until the time of Muhammad, peace be upon. Today, it is well established the damage gambling causes to families and even mental health. The idea of getting something for nothing is not the proper way of life prescribed by the teachings of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

R. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never drank alcohol or strong drink, even though it was a very normal thing for people of his time and place.



49 "O you believers! Intoxicating drinks, gambling, fortune telling, etc. is the hated work of the devil. So stay away from all of that horrible stuff, that you will be successful."



"The devil only wants to create hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks, etc.) and gambling and to keep you from the remembrance of Allah and from your proper worship (prayers). So, why won't you away from them?"

[Holy Quran 5:90-91]

The Arabs, like most other cultures at his time, drank alcohol without concern for their health or for their altered behavior while intoxicated. Many of them were alcoholics.

In today's world there is little need to present long discussions on the evil and dangers of drinking alcohol. Besides causing diseases and ruining a person's health, alcohol is often attributed to be the cause of many traffic accidents resulting in property damage, injuries and deaths. The first order was for the followers of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to leave off drinking while engaged in worship, then came stronger orders to leave drinking all together. Thus, offering a time for the early Muslims to break off from their addiction to strong drink.

S. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not engage in gossip or backbiting and he always turned away from hearing anything related to it.



O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful to what you have done.

[Holy Quran 49:6]



O you who believe! Do not allow one group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former; nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former, nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad is it, to insult one's brother after having Faith? And whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed wrong-doers.

★ ***O you who believe! Avoid much suspicions, indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting) . And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful.***

[Holy Quran 49:11-12]

Certainly, these teachings would be well appreciated in today's world where we find almost everyone engaging in the worst of gossiping and insulting of others, even the closest of relatives and loved ones.

T. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was most generous and encouraged others to be the same way in their dealings with others. He even asked them to forgive the debts of others with hope of receiving a better reward with their Lord (Allah).

★

And if the debtor is in a hard time (has no money), then grant him time till it is easy for him to repay, but if you remit it by way of charity, that is better for you if you did but know.

★

And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.

[Holy Quran 2:280-281]

S. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the payment of charity to the poor and he was the defender and protector of widows, orphans and the wayfarers.

★

"Therefore, do not oppress the orphan, nor repulse the beggar."

[Holy Quran 93:9-10]

★

51 *Charity is for the poor, who in Allah's Cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land (for trade or work). The one who knows them not, thinks that they are rich because of their modesty. You may know them by their mark, they do not beg of people at all. And whatever you spend in good, surely Allah knows it well.*

[Holy Quran 2:273]

U. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught people how to deal with the most extreme difficulties and tests that occur to us throughout our lives. He held that only through patience and a humble attitude would we find true resolution and understanding of life's complications and disappointments. He the most patient of all and was exemplary in his own humbleness. All who knew him had to admit to these virtues.



O you who believe! Seek help in patience and the prayer. Truly! Allah is with the patient ones.

[Holy Quran 2:153]

He explained this life was a test from Allah:



And certainly, Allah shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient ones.

[Holy Quran 2:155]



Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return."

[Holy Quran 2:156]

V. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, fasted for days at a time to be closer to Almighty God and away from the narrowness of worldly attractions.



O you who believe! Observing the fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become pious.

W. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, called for an end to racism and tribalism from the beginning to the end of his mission. He was truly the peacemaker for all times and all people.



O mankind! (Allah) has created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who is one of the pious. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware

[Holy Quran 49:13]

And in another verse of the Quran:



O mankind! Have piety and be most dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever an AllWatcher over you.

[Holy Quran 4:1]

X. Regarding keeping up good relationships and bringing people back together after a falling out, the Quran says:



And if two parties or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both, but if one of them rebels against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that which rebels till it complies with the Command of Allah; then if it complies, then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Verily! Allah loves those who are equitable.



The believers are nothing else than brothers to each other. So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy.

[Holy Quran 49:9-10]

Y. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught that Jesus, peace and blessings be upon him, was the immaculate conception and miracle birth of Mary, and that she was the best creation of Almighty God. He insisted even to the Jews of Madinah, that Jesus, peace and blessings be upon him, was the Messiah, the Christ, the one predicted to come in their Torah (Old Testament). He also taught that Jesus, peace and blessings be upon him, did many miracles by the permission of Almighty God, curing the lepers, restoring sight to the blind and even bringing a dead man back to life, and he was not dead, rather Almighty God had raised him up. He also predicted Jesus, peace and blessings be upon him, is going to return again in the Last Days to lead the true believers in a victory over the evil and unrighteous people, and he will destroy the Anti-Christ.

Z. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade any killing, even when his followers were being killed, until the orders for retaliation came from Allah. Even then the limits were clearly spelled out and only those engaged in active combat against the Muslims or Islam were to be fought in combat. And even then, only according to very strict rules from Allah. fought in combat. And even then, only according to very strict rules from Allah.

What Did His Followers Say?

"His name was Muhammad" (peace and blessings be upon him)

To begin: You may be a Christian Protestant, Catholic, Jew, an atheist or an agnostic; or you may belong to any of many different religious denominations existing in today's world. You might even be a communist or believe in man's democracy as the rule on earth. Whoever you are and whatever ideological or political beliefs, social habits you may hold, there is no doubt - you should understand what others have to say about this man.

The world has had its share of great personalities. But these were one sided figures who distinguished themselves in but one or two fields, such as religious thought or military leadership. The lives and teachings of these great personalities of the earth are shrouded in the mist of time. There is so much speculation about the time and place their birth, the mode and style of their life, the nature and detail of their teachings and the degree and measure of their success or failure that is impossible for humanity to reconstruct, accurately the lives and teachings of these men and women.

But this is not the case of this man, Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who accomplished so much in such diverse fields of human thought and behavior in the fullest blaze of human history. Every detail of his private life and public utterances has been accurately documented and faithfully preserved up until our day. The authenticity of the records so preserved is vouched for not only by the faithful followers but even by his prejudiced critics.

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a religious teacher, a social reformer, a moral guide, an administrative colossus, a faithful friend, a wonderful companion, a devoted husband, a loving father - all in one. No other man in history ever excelled or equaled him in any of these different aspects of life - but it was only for the selfless personality of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to achieve such incredible perfection.

He was by far, the most remarkable man that ever set foot on this earth. He preached a religion, founded a state, built a nation, laid down a moral code, initiated numerous social and political reforms, established a powerful and dynamic society to practice and represent his teachings and

54 completely revolutionized the worlds of human thought and behavior for all times to come.

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was born in what was then known as Felix Arabia, fourteen hundred years ago. He started his mission of preaching a religion of monotheism; a Way of Life based on the surrender, submission and obedience to the Commandments of Almighty God, in sincerity and peace.

The word "Islam" in Arabic means "the submission to God, in peace."

Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him) mission began at the age of forty and departed from this world at the age of sixty-three. During this short period of 23 years of his prophethood, he changed the complete Arabian Peninsula from paganism and idolatry to worship of One God, from tribal quarrels and wars to national solidarity and cohesion, from drunkenness and debauchery to sobriety and piety, from lawlessness and anarchy to disciplined living, from utter bankruptcy to the highest standards of moral excellence.

Human history has never known such a complete transformation of a people or a place before or since - and IMAGINE all these unbelievable wonders in JUST OVER TWO DECADES.

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was nothing more or less than a human being. but he was a man with a noble mission, which was to unite humanity on the worship of ONE and ONLY ONE GOD and to teach them the way to honest and upright living, based on the commands of God. He always described himself as, 'A Servant and Messenger of God' and so indeed every action of his proclaimed to be.

Today after a lapse of fourteen centuries, the life and teachings of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, have survived without the slightest loss, alteration or interpolation. They offer the same undying hope for treating mankind's many ills, which they did when he was alive. This is not a claim of Mohammed's(peace and blessings be upon him) followers, but the inescapable conclusion forced upon by a critical and unbiased history.

The least YOU can do as a thinking and concerned human being is to stop for a moment and ask your self: Could these statements sounding so extraordinary and revolutionary really be true? And supposing they really are true and you did not know this man Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or hear about him, isn't it time you responded to this tremendous challenge and put in some effort to know him?

It will cost you nothing, but it may prove to be the beginning of a completely new era in your life.

We invite you to make a discovery of this wonderful man, Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the like of whom never walked on the face of this earth

What Do Others Say About Him?

Before We Begin our "A to Z of Muhammad" - Let's See What 12 Famous People Have Said About Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) Throughout the Centuries...

His complete biography has been authenticated and circulated amongst scholars around the world starting while he was still alive and continuing up until today. One of the first examples we quote from is from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, as it confirms:

55 (Regarding Muhammad) *"... a mass of detail in the early sources shows that he was an honest and upright man who had gained the respect and loyalty of others who were likewise honest and upright men."*

[Vol. 12]

Another impressive tribute to Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him is in the very well written work of Michael H. Hart, *"The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History."* He states that the most influential person in all history was Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with Jesus second. Examine his actual words:

"My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level."

[Michael H. Hart, THE 100: A RANKING OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSONS IN HISTORY, New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1978, page. 33.]

According to the Quran, Prophet Muhammad was the most excellent example for all of humanity. Even non-Muslim historians recognize him to be one of the most successful personalities in history. Read what the Reverend R. Bosworth-Smith wrote in "Mohammed & Mohammedanism" in 1946:

"Head of the state as well as the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but, he was pope without the pope's claims, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue. If ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a Right Divine, it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without instruments and without its support. He cared not for dressing of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life."

While we are reviewing statements from famous non-Muslims about Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, consider this:

"Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?"

[Lamartine, HISTOIRE DE LA TURQUIE, Paris, 1854, Vol. II, pp. 276-277.]

And then we read what George Bernard Shaw, a famous writer and non-Muslim says:

"He must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness."

[The Genuine Islam, Singapore, Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936]

Then we found that K. S. Ramakrishna Rao, an Indian (Hindu) professor of Philosophy, in his booklet *"Muhammad the Prophet of Islam"* calls him the "perfect model for human life." Professor Ramakrishna Rao explains his point by saying:

"The personality of Muhammad, it is most difficult to get into the whole truth of it. Only a glimpse of it I can catch. What a dramatic succession of picturesque scenes. There is Muhammad the Prophet. There is Muhammad the Warrior; Muhammad the Businessman; Muhammad the Statesman; Muhammad the Orator; Muhammad the Reformer; Muhammad the Refuge of Orphans; Muhammad the Protector of Slaves; Muhammad the Emancipator of Women; Muhammad the Judge; Muhammad the Saint. All in all these magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is alike a hero."

What should we think about our prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when someone with the worldly status such as Mahatma Gandhi, speaking on the character of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, says in 'Young India':

"I wanted to know the best of one who holds today undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind... I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the 2nd volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of the great life."

English author Thomas Carlyle in his 'Heroes and Hero Worship', was simply amazed:

"How one man single handedly, could weld warring tribes and wandering Bedouins into a most powerful and civilized nation in less than two decades."

57 And Diwan Chand Sharma wrote in *"The Prophets of the East"*:

"Muhammad was the soul of kindness, and his influence was felt and never forgotten by those around him"

[D.C. Sharma, *The Prophets of the East*, Calcutta, 1935, pp. 12]

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was nothing more or less than a human being, but he was a man with a noble mission, which was to unite humanity on the worship of ONE and ONLY ONE GOD and to teach them the way to honest and upright living based on the commands of God. He always described himself as, 'A Servant and Messenger of God' and so indeed every action of his proclaimed to be.

Speaking on the aspect of equality before God in Islam, the famous poetess of India, Sarojini Naidu says:

"It was the first religion that preached and practiced democracy; for, in the mosque, when the call for prayer is sounded and worshippers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and king kneel side by side and proclaim: 'God Alone is Great'... I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes man instinctively a brother."

[S. Naidu, *Ideals of Islam*, vide *Speeches & Writings*, Madras, 1918, p. 169]

In the words of Professor Hurgronje:

"The league of nations founded by the prophet of Islam put the principle of international unity and human brotherhood on such universal foundations as to show candle to other nations." He continues, "the fact is that no nation of the world can show a parallel to what Islam has done towards the realization of the idea of the League of Nations."

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley, on the profession of ISLAM, writes in *"History of the Saracen Empires"*:

"I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD, AND MAHOMET, AN APOSTLE OF GOD' is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honor of the Prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtues; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his

[History of the Saracen Empires, London, 1870, p. 54]

EWolfgang Goethe, perhaps the greatest European poet ever, wrote about Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He said:

"He is a prophet and not a poet and therefore his Koran is to be seen as Divine Law and not as a book of a human being, made for education or entertainment."

[Noten und Abhandlungen zum Weststlichen Dvan, WA I, 7, 32]

What Do Muslims Say?

Considering the qualities and teachings of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, testified to by some many people throughout history and even testified to by Allah Himself, we conclude the following to be only a partial list of the qualities, morals and virtues of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

A. Articulate - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, although unable to read or write throughout his entire life, was able to express himself in clear and decisive terms and in the best of classical Arabic language.

B. Brave - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was praised for his courage and bravery during and after his life by his followers and opponents alike. He has always been an inspiration to Muslims and even non-Muslims throughout the centuries.

C. Courteous - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, always put other people's feelings ahead of his own and was the most courteous of hosts and the best of guests wherever he went.

D. Dedicated - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was determined to carry out his mission and present the message with which he had been sent, to the entire world.

E. Eloquent - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, claimed he was not a poet, yet he could express himself in the most concise manner, using the least amount of words in a most classic manner. His words are still quoted by millions of Muslims and non-Muslims today everywhere.

F. Friendly - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was noted for being the most friendly and considerate of all who knew him.

59 G. Generous - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was most generous with his possessions and never wanted to keep anything if there was anyone who was in need. This was true of gold, silver, animals and even food and drink.

H. Hospitable - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was indeed, noted to be the most gracious of hosts and taught his companions and followers to be the best of hosts to all their guests as a part of their religion.

I. Intelligent - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has been proclaimed by many commentators who have studied his life and actions, to be of the most intelligent of all men who ever lived.

J. Just - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was most fair and just in all of his dealings. Whether in business or in giving judgment in any matter, he practiced justice on all levels.

K. Kindness - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was kind and considerate to everyone he met. He tired his best to present the message of worship of the Creator instead of the creations to all he met in the kindest fashion and most considerate manner.

L. Loving - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the most loving toward Allah and to his family members, friends, companions and even those who did not accept his message but remained peaceful to him and his followers.

M. Messenger of Mercy - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is proclaimed in the Quran by Allah, as being sent to the entire world as the "Mercy to all mankind and jinn."

N. Noble - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the most noble and distinguished of all men. Everyone knew of his fine character and honorable background.

O. "Oneness" - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is most famous for his proclamation of the "Oneness of Allah" or monotheism (called "Tawheed" in Arabic).

P. Patient - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the most steadfast and forbearing in all of the trials and tests he lived through.

Q. Quiet - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was often very quiet and never was heard to be boastful, loud or obnoxious on any occasion.

R. Resourceful - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was most clever and resourceful in handling even the most serious of difficulties and problems confronting him and his companions.

S. Straightforward - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was known by all to speak directly to a subject and not twist things around in his speech. He also used a minimal amount of verbiage and considered excessive talk to be vain and unproductive.

T. Tactful - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the most delicate and tactful in his dealings with the people. He never scratched the dignity of someone, even though unbelievers often insulted him and maligned him.

U. Unmatched - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is known throughout the world today as the man who most influenced the lives of so many people during his own time and for all times to come.

60 V. Valiant - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave new meaning to the word valiant and he was always most honorable in all of his affairs, whether defending the rights of orphans or preserving the honor of widows or fighting for those in distress. He was not intimidated when outnumbered in battle, nor did he turn away from his duties in protecting and defending the truth and freedom.

W. Wali - The Arabic word, "**wali**" (plural is owliya) is a bit difficult to bring into English without some explanation. For this reason I decided to leave it in Arabic and offer from my humble understanding one of the most important aspects of the character and personality of the prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Some say the word means; "**protectors**" and others have said "**darlings**" or "those in whom you put full trust and confide everything" like the Catholics might do with their priests. While still others simply offered the word "friends." While discussing this subject with one of my beloved teachers, Salim Morgan, he mentioned to me the meaning might be closer to the English word, "**ally**." This is perhaps, a lot closer in meaning because when a person gives their pledge of allegiance to someone he or she is taking that person as a "**wally**" and this is called giving "**bay'ah**" in Arabic. Allah tells us the Quran not to take the Jews and Christians as "**owliya**" in place of Allah. While we understand the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) are the closest to us in faith, at the same time we are instructed here not to take anyone as our "**confessor**" or "**intimate ally**" or "one to whom we give our pledge of allegiance" in place of Allah or His messenger, Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was the living example of the most trustworthy and loyal of all human beings who ever lived on this earth. Anything mentioned to him in confidence would never be divulged nor shared with others. And when he was put in place of authority or "**wali**" over the people, they found him to be the best of those to be trusted.

X. "X" - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could neither read nor write, not even his own name. In today's world he would have to use an "X" to "sign" a document. He used a signet ring worn on the little finger of his right hand to seal any documents or letters sent to the leaders of other lands.

Y. Yielding - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would yield his own desires and forego his own ideas in favor of whatever Allah directed him to do. While considering opinions from his followers, he often accepted their ideas over his own, preferring to yield in favor of others as much as possible.

Z. Zealous - Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the most zealous of all the prophets of Allah, in carrying out his mission of "Peace through the submission to the Will of God." He truly was the most enthusiastic in regard to delivering the message with which he had been entrusted by Allah; the message of "**Laa elaha illa-allah, Muhammadar-Rasoolulah**" (There is none worthy of worship, except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah).

Alief. "AJEEB" (AMAZING) - We couldn't resist the chance for one more letter - even if it is the first letter of the Arabic alphabet ("|" alief).

Muhammad was truly amazing in every respect. He delivered a message of a complete and total way of life, encompassing everything from the time a person wakes up until time to sleep and from the cradle to the grave. And if someone were to follow this Way of Life ("deen" in Arabic), they would achieve the greatest success here in this life and the greatest success in the Next Life as well.

Conclusion

Before concluding our review of Muhammad, A to Z, it must be mentioned, that although Muhammad is deeply loved, revered and emulated by Muslims as God's final

61 messenger, he is NOT the object of worship for Muslims.

Now it is up to you. You are a rational thinking, concerned human being. As such, you should already be asking yourself:

Could these extraordinary, revolutionary and amazing statements, all about this one man, really be true? What if this is true?

You have read what famous writers, thinkers, poets, philosophers, clergy and humanitarians have said about Muhammad. You have seen the recordings of those who knew him and knew of him and what others have said, about Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

So, the question now is, "What do you say about Muhammad?"

You be the judge. www.guideus.tv BY YUSUF ESTEZ

What do Muslims think of Jesus?

There are many questions that come to mind when the name Jesus is mentioned. Some people say he was a prophet, others call him a god, while others say he was a very wise man. But whatever your idea is, one thing remains certain: he was not your ordinary man. So if there is something special about him, why all the confusion?

Just who was Jesus anyway?

His Origin

Jesus lived about 2,000 years ago in ancient Palestine when the Roman Empire was at its zenith. He was not conceived in the usual way, but was implanted in the womb of a young woman named Mary. God simply commanded, "Be" and he was. In this sense, he was "a word" of God and a special sign for humanity. In fact, he was the last in a long line of religious guides sent to the Jews.

Mary, The Blessed

Mary was a righteous woman. Her mother dedicated her to God's service even before she was born. As a child, she lived a life marked by health and righteousness, which others pointed to in admiration. She was raised by the wise Zechariah, who instilled in her, a beautiful sense of faith in God. When she had become a young woman, Mary sought to purify herself further before her Lord. Knowing that the hustle of life in the towns was distracting, she withdrew from her people to a sanctuary in the East. There she could meditate in seclusion and peace. Suddenly, on a day that seemed no different from the rest, an angel of God visited her, disguised in the likeness of a human. Afraid of so strange a sight, Mary prayed for protection, but the strange being reassured her and declared that he was a messenger from the Lord to announce the glad-tidings of a faultless son. Mary, astounded, asked how this was possible seeing that no man had ever touched

62 her. But the angel replied, “Your Lord says, it is easy for Me ...”. But when she felt the little child within her, she fled her sanctuary out of fear of what her family would do or say when they heard the news. Mary, however, was not to face hardship. When in her despair she cried out to God for oblivion, a voice soothed her and she found shade and a cool spring. Under a date-palm in the warmth of late summer, she made her dwelling and there bore the child unlike any other in human history.

Shortly thereafter, Mary returned to her community carrying the child who was to be called Messiah, Jesus, and son of Mary. When her people saw her with the baby in her arms they couldn’t believe their eyes, let alone accept her word. They refused to believe when she told of an angel who came and told her she was chosen above all other women to carry this burden. They accused her of infidelity and implied that she had ruined the family name. Mary, being overwhelmed, simply motioned towards the child meekly.

The Miracles

Now the child was the product of a miracle and consequently, miraculous things began to happen. In defense of his mother and of the truth, the infant Jesus spoke saying, “I am a servant of God. He has given me Scripture and has made me a Prophet. He has blessed me wherever I may be and has made prayer and charity my duty as long as I live.” This put the detractors to rest.

Throughout his youth, Jesus remained dutiful to his mother and developed quickly in intelligence, wisdom, and piety. He dumfounded the learned and was greatly admired by those around him who appreciated his talents. He claimed to be a sign of God and a Messenger to the Israelites.

His people had strayed from the spirit of truth and placed their trust in legalism, thereby burying their sense of mercy beneath dusty scrolls and rituals. Finally, when he came of age, Jesus began to travel and preach throughout the land of Palestine about a return to the truth of the old revelations and a rejection of all that man had added. In his task he was supported by the spirit of truth, the angel Gabriel.

The Gospel, His Message

He taught that love and mercy overcome hate and anger and that only a true and sincere faith in the Creator and obedience to His will can bring a person salvation in this life as well as in the next. To reinforce his message, which was called “Injeel” (Good News), God granted him the performance of miracles. He healed the sick, uplifted the distressed and revived the dead. All these things he did with the permission of God, never taking credit for them himself.

He led a simple and pious life. Soon he attracted an inner-circle of devoted followers who listened to his teachings with fervor and humility. These disciples, among them Peter, Barnabas, and John helped him carry the message of Divine Love to the people. They helped him in his mission.

But no righteous man of God is without trial and tribulation. As the message of Jesus began to gain wider acceptance, a small clique of hypocrites and evil men began to plot against him. They were the priests and leaders of the Jews whose position and wealth depended upon their place as the sole interpreters of religion to the masses. They pursued him and his followers and eventually captured him. Though they abused him, he never renounced his faith in the one God. So in their anger they plotted to crucify him on a Roman cross. But Jesus slipped from their grip at the last moment, and all the while they thought they had succeeded. They were sure they had killed him but God answered Jesus' prayer and saved him from their schemes. Confusion overtook the mob and they might have killed the man who betrayed Jesus instead. In any case, Jesus escaped from their grasp. Then God removed Jesus from this world into another dimension, to a place with Him, not to return until a later time.

With their teacher gone, the devoted followers of Jesus tried to maintain the purity and simplicity of his teachings. But they were soon besieged and overtaken by a flood of Roman and Greek influences, which eventually so buried and distorted the message of Jesus that only a little of its truth now remains. Strange doctrines of Jesus being a man-god, of God dying, of saint worship and of God being made up of different parts came into vogue and were accepted by many of those who took the name "Christians" centuries after Jesus.

Conclusion

The only records that have come down to us concerning Jesus are some sketchy biographical material, poorly researched and compiled, which can in no way be representative of the full and accurate Message of Jesus, the Son of Mary. The time of the final and incorruptible Message was not yet at hand. It would be left to the last prophet of God, Muhammad (peace be upon him), to clarify the truth from man's additions and deletions.

Jesus taught the same eternal message that was taught by all the Messengers of God, from Adam, on through Noah, Abraham, Moses and ending with the mission of God's last Guidepost to humanity, Muhammad (peace be on them all), whose coming was foretold by Jesus himself.

Every nation and every people, from the Aztecs to the Greeks, have received a Prophet or a Messenger from God. Jesus was the last of a series of Messengers sent to the Israelites, but they consistently strayed from the path of surrender to God. Each of the many Messengers spoke a different language and followed varied customs. Yet the core faith taught by each was the same: surrender your imperfect and fickle will to the perfect will of the Power that is greater than you. You will then find the peace and freedom that only the Creator of all things can provide. Then you must do what is right and good to your fellow creatures. This way of life is called Islam (surrender to God and find peace).

By Yahiya Emerick

Muslims respect and venerate Jesus Christ. They consider him to be one of God's greatest

64 messengers to humankind. The Qur'an re-affirms his miraculous birth and his miraculous abilities. Furthermore, his mother Mary is regarded as one of the most pure and exalted women of all creation. As the Qur'an says:

“Behold! the angel said: ‘God has chosen you and purified you and has chosen you above the women of all nations. O Mary! God gives you the good news of a word from Him, whose name shall be Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, honored in this world and the hereafter, and one of those brought near to God’ (3:42).

Islam regards its teachings to be a re-affirmation and culmination of the teachings of previous monotheistic religions like Judaism and Christianity. Hence, all Muslims believe in Moses and Jesus as Prophets of God. Prophet Muhammad was commanded to recite in the Qur'an:

“Say, we believe in God and that which was revealed unto us, and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob, and the tribes and that which was entrusted unto Moses and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord We make no distinction between any of them and unto Him we have submitted” (3:84).

A Muslim never refers to him simply as “Jesus”, but always adds the phrase “upon him be peace.” The Qur'an confirms his virgin birth, and an entire surah (chapter) of the Qur'an is entitled “Mary.” The Qur'an describes the Annunciation as follows:

“She said: ‘O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me?’ He said: ‘Even so; God creates what He wills. When He decrees a thing, He says to it, “Be!” and it is.’” (Qur'an 3:42-7)

Jesus was born miraculously through the same power that had brought Adam into being without a father: “Truly the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust and then said to him, ‘Be!’ and he was.” (Qur'an 3:59)

During his prophetic mission, Jesus performed many miracles. The Qur'an tells us that he said: “I have come to you with a sign from your Lord: I make for you out of clay, as it were, a figure of a bird, and breathe into it and it becomes a bird by God's leave. And I heal the blind, and the lepers, and I raise the dead by God's leave.” (Qur'an 3:49)

Neither Muhammad nor Jesus came to change the basic doctrine of the belief in One God, brought by earlier prophets, but to confirm and renew it. In the Qur'an, Jesus is reported as saying that he came: “To attest the law which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden to you; I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear God and obey me.” (Qur'an 3:50)

Source: islamicity.com/JesusInIslam/Jesus.htm

ISA"Jesus", the prophet of Islam

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- MARYAM, THEMOTHER OF ^ISA(Jesus)
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Introduction

Allah sent many messengers to the humans as a mercy from Him. *Allah* sent them all to teach the people what is the correct and acceptable worship of *Allah*--their Creator and the Creator of everything. All the prophets of *Allah*, the first of whom was *Adam* and the last of whom is *Muhammad*, came with one Religion--*Islam*, one creed--the belief in the Oneness of *Allah*. They all taught that *Allah* is attributed with all the perfect attributes and that He does not resemble any of His creations. They taught what *Allah* ordered us to perform with and refrain from in this life. They taught there is the Judgment Day in which each one of us will be judged as to whether or not we fulfilled our obligations in this life. None of them taught their people what contradicts the belief in the Oneness of *Allah*. Each one of them ordered their followers to believe in the rest of the prophets. *Imam al-Bukhariyy* related that Prophet *Muhammad*, *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*, said:

which means:<< The prophets are like brothers from the same father with different mothers. Their Religion is one although their *Shari^ah* (rules of the Religion) differed. I am the most deserving of Prophet *^Isa*. There was no other prophet between us.>>

Allah revealed Prophet *^Isa* (Jesus) as the messenger before Prophet *Muhammad*. He was one of the five best messengers of *Allah*, called *Ulul-^Azm*, those with the highest status, who were the most patient. He was *^Isa*, the son of *Maryam*, the daughter of *^Imran*, from the sons of Israel. Prophet *^Isa*, as all the prophets, was truthful in what he conveyed from *Allah*, and although today we follow the *Shari^ah* of Prophet *Muhammad*, Muslims respect, love, and believe in *^Isa* and in his prophethood.

Maryam (Mary), the mother of [^]Isa, was a pious Muslim woman from the offspring of Israel during the time of Prophet Zakariyya. Prophet Zakariyya was a prophet of Allah revealed to convey to the people to follow the Shari'ah revealed to Prophet Musa. In the Qur'an there is a chapter named *Maryam* referring to *Maryam* (Mary), the mother of [^]Isa. This chapter talks about *Maryam*: her birth, her story, and the birth of Prophet [^]Isa, and other things.

Maryam's mother conceived and delivered Maryam when she was an old woman, at an age when women usually can no longer have babies. One day *Maryam's* mother saw a bird feeding its young and she longed for a baby herself. She made a supplication to Allah to bless her with a child and vowed that she would make him a servant for the Holy House in Jerusalem, dedicated for worship, because she thought the child would be male. Allah answered her supplication and *Maryam's* mother conceived and delivered a baby girl. She named her "*Maryam*" and asked Allah to protect her and her offspring from evil.

Since *Maryam's* father had died, Prophet Zakariyya (who was the husband of *Maryam's* sister) became *Maryam's* guardian. From him, *Maryam* learned the Religion. She grew up as a righteous, pure, and pious Muslim woman worshipping Allah and endeavoring greatly in performing obedience to Him. Before she turned fourteen (14) years old, Maryam was a *waliyyah* (a very pious woman with a special status). She became the best of the women in the world. It is mentioned in the Qur'an that the angels said Allah chose *Maryam* and preferred her to the other women of the world. (Al Imran, 42-43).

THE BIRTH OF [^]ISA(Jesus)

Ibn Jarir and others narrated that one day *Maryam* ran out of water. She asked her cousin, *Yusuf*, the son of *Ya'qub* to go with her to get some. He declined, saying he had his sufficiency for that day, so *Maryam* went to fetch water alone. There, she found *Jibril*, whom Allah had sent to her in the shape of a man. Thinking he was a human who might harm her, she asked refuge with Allah from him. *Jibril* told her, "I am the Messenger of your Lord to you. I was sent to give you a pious child who is pure from sins." *Maryam* told him, "How would I have a son? I have no husband, and I am not an adulterer or a fornicator." *Jibril* told her, "Creating a son without a father is an easy matter to Allah. Allah will make him a sign for the people and an indication of the Power of Allah. He will send him as a mercy from Him and an endowment to the one who follows him and believes in him. Creating him is a matter Allah willed and destined, so it will not be blocked or changed."

Jibril blew the soul of ʿIsa into *Maryam* and ʿIsa's soul entered into her womb. *Maryam* became pregnant with ʿIsa, peace be upon him. There is a difference of opinion as to the term of her pregnancy, some said nine months, some said eight, and some said other than that. However, when the signs of pregnancy became apparent on her, her cousin, *Yusuf* the Carpenter, was disturbed and did not know how to interpret that matter. If he wanted to accuse her he would remember how pious she was. If he wanted to declare her innocence, he would see the signs of pregnancy. So he decided to open the subject with her. He asked her, "Tell me, would plants grow without seeds? Would trees grow without rainfall? Would there be a child without a male?" To all these questions *Maryam* said "Yes." Then she asked him, "Did you not know *Allah* made the plants emerge without seeds the day He created them? Did you not know *Allah* created the trees the first time without rain? Did you not know *Allah* created *Adam* and *Hawwa*' (Eve) without a father or a mother?" *Yusuf* knew all these things and when she responded in this way, he felt assured of her innocence and that this was something special given to her by *Allah*.

When the signs of her pregnancy became apparent, *Maryam* went away from her people. The pangs of birth led her to the trunk of a dead palm tree. Out of her shyness from the people, and fearing they would accuse her of having done something ugly, she wished she was dead and not a trace of her could be found. *Jibril* called to her, comforting her. He told her *Allah* made a small river run under her from which she could drink, and should she shake the trunk of the dead palm tree next to her, it would turn green and moist dates would fall down from which she could eat and be nourished. *Jibril* told her when she faces her people with her son to tell anyone who questions her about him that she had made a vow not to talk to any human for that day. That day, *Maryam* gave birth to her son, ʿIsa, peace be upon him. Forty (40) days later she carried him back to her people. They accused her of having fornicated. In response, *Maryam* pointed to her son, meaning to tell them to talk to him. They were angered at this and thought she was mocking them by asking them to speak with a 40-day old baby lying in a small cradle. At this, *Allah* made ʿIsa speak. He said:

which are verses 30-33 of *Surat Maryam* and mean: [I am a slave of *Allah*. He will reveal the Book to me and make me a prophet. He blessed me wherever I am. In the rules revealed to me there will be a special attention given to Prayers and *Zakat*. *Allah* predestined that I will be kind to my mother and not a tyrant with a bad ending. Peace was on me the day I was born. Peace will be on me on the day I will die and on the day I am raised alive again.]

When *Maryam*'s people heard that, they refrained from harming her or Prophet *Zakariyya*, about whom they had made ugly accusations. After Baby ʿIsa spoke these words, he did not speak again

until he became at an age when children normally begin to speak. ʿIsa's speaking from the cradle was a preparation and a sign of his creed and coming prophethood, when he would call the people to believe in Allāh, the One Who does not have a partner and to believe in the message of ʿIsa--that he was the slave and messenger of Allāh. The first words he spoke were, "I am a slave of Allāh."

EARLY LIFE OF PROPHET ʿISA(Jesus)

Lady Maryam took ʿIsa to Egypt where they stayed for a period of time. Then they returned to the countries of ash-Shām--to a city known as an-Nasirah. ʿIsa, peace be upon him, studied the Torah in the schools and memorized it. He spoke Syriac, the language of the people of Palestine at that time, and the language in which the Heavenly Book, called the Injil, was revealed to him. He was a pious worshipper of Allāh, following the rules of the Torah revealed to Prophet Musa.

THE REVELATION OF PROPHETHOOD

Allāh sent the Revelation of Prophethood to ʿIsa when he was thirty years old. Allāh revealed to him new laws which abrogated some of the laws revealed to Prophet Musa. Prophet ʿIsa conveyed the revelation to the people and called them to believe in his message.

Prophet ʿIsa, like all the prophets of Allāh, performed miracles. Allāh sent all the prophets with miracles as a proof to their prophethood, so the people would witness, know about them, and believe in their prophethood. Many of Prophet ʿIsa's miracles were in curing illnesses, to be a stronger proof of his truthfulness, since the people at his time were famous for being knowledgeable in the field of medicine. Prophet ʿIsa cured those with seemingly incurable illnesses. Prophet ʿIsa cured a man inflicted with leprosy. He put his honorable hand on the face of a man who was born blind and cured his sight. Once Prophet ʿIsa supplicated to Allāh to bring back to life one person who had died and was being carried to the burial place, and Allāh brought this person back to life.

Prophet ʿIsa had other kinds of miracles also. He formed the shape of bats from clay and then they would fly away a distance. One of the miracles of ʿIsa is mentioned in the Qurʾān in Surat al-Māʾidah, Verses 112-114, which tells about one time when Prophet ʿIsa and the people who were with him reached to a place where there was not enough food for all the people with him. The students of ʿIsa asked him to supplicate Allāh for food which would come down on them from the sky. ʿIsa made supplication to Allāh and the angels brought down the food on a piece of material before the eyes of the people. Hundreds and hundreds of people ate from that food, and there was no sign the food had diminished in quantity. This miracle increased the belief of the believers. The

After his revelation, Prophet ^Isa lived on earth for about three years. He used to travel from place to place calling people to the proper worship of Allah. He was so detached from the worldly matters that he did not worry that he did not have a house to return to at night. He used to sleep wherever the night would fall on him, whether he was in an open land or in a sheltered place. He wore clothing made out of unwoven wool. He ate from the raw plants of the earth, without desiring to cook them. He did not marry or have children.

THE INJIL(BIBLE)

^Isa received a Heavenly Book, the *Injil*, which contained the *Shari*[^]*ah*, (rules of the Religion) revealed to him. In it was the prohibition of associating partners with Allah. In it was the prohibition to consume the usurious gain (*riba*), pig meat, blood, and the meat of animals not slaughtered properly. It contained the order to perform the Prayer (with bowing and prostration) twice a day. It had the order to fast (but other than the month of *Rama*[^]*dan*), and the order to perform *taharah*. Prophet ^Isa came with a *Shari*[^]*ah* that contained making permissible some of the things which had been forbidden upon the children of Israel in the Torah. Although what is called "The Bible" today contains some true stories of Prophet ^Isa, it does not contain the true *Injil* which was revealed to him.

THE ASCENSION OF PROPHET ^ISA(Jesus)

When Prophet ^Isa was 33 years old, the blasphemers among the offspring of Israel plotted to kill him, but Allah saved him from their harm. *Ibn Abi*[^]*Hatim* and *an-Nasa*[^]*iyy* narrated from the route of *Ibn* [^]*Abbas* that he said:

Prophet ^Isa was in session with twelve of his elite companions in a house. He told them that among them would be who would blaspheme in the future. Then he asked them, "Who among you would want to be made to look like me, be killed in my place, and be my companion in Paradise." The youngest among them stood up and said, "Me." Prophet ^Isa told him to sit, then repeated his same question. Again, the same young man said, "Me." Again, Prophet ^Isa told him to sit, then again asked the same question. After the same young man volunteered for the third time, Prophet ^Isa received the Revelation that this young man would be the one who would be made to look like him and killed instead of him. Prophet ^Isa was raised to the sky from an opening in the ceiling of the house. When the Jews came after Prophet ^Isa, they saw that young man, whom Allah made to look like ^Isa. They took him, thinking he was Prophet ^Isa, and crucified him.

It should be noted here there are two widespread false stories about this matter. In one, it is claimed that one of ^Isa's students was paid a great sum of money to lead those Jews to

ʿIsa however *Allāh* made him look like ʿIsa, so they thought he was ʿIsa and they crucified him. In another, it is said that the person killed in place of ʿIsa was the leader of the Jews. Both of these stories are false.

After Prophet ʿIsa was raised to the sky, his nation lived following his guidance, teaching, and methodology for two hundred (200) years. However, the nation of Prophet ʿIsa did not remain steadfast to *Islām*. Three hundred (300) years after Prophet ʿIsa was raised to the sky, those who were following the ones who had perverted the teachings of Prophet ʿIsa became very numerous, and those who were truly following the Religion of *Islām* were few and weak. After some five hundred (500) years, none of the believing Muslims of ʿIsa's nation were left. When Prophet *Muhammad* was revealed, he was the only Muslim worshipping only *Allāh* from among the people of the earth.

PROPHET ʿISA'S (Jesus) DESCENT TO EARTH

Prophet ʿIsa, peace be upon him, is still alive--in the second sky--worshipping *Allāh*. He will descend to earth before the Day of Judgment and his descent will be one of the great signs of the nearing of that Day. Prophet *Muhammad* informed us ʿIsa will descend to earth at a place on the eastern side of Damascus, with his hands on the wings of two angels. He will meet a group of Muslims getting ready to perform the Prayer, with the *Mahdiyy* as their *Imām*. The *Mahdiyy* will ask Prophet ʿIsa to lead them in that prayer, however, ʿIsa will ask the *Mahdiyy* to stand *imām* for them--as a sign that Prophet ʿIsa will rule with the rules revealed to Prophet *Muhammad*. After this one time, ʿIsa will lead the people in prayers because he has a higher status than the *Mahdiyy*.

After he descends, Prophet ʿIsa will rule the earth with the *Shariʿah* of Prophet *Muhammad*, the *Shariʿah* Muslims are ordered to follow until the Judgment Day. He will break the cross, kill the pig, and abolish the *jizyah* (compulsory payment by the People of the Book to the Muslim state), because in the rules of Prophet *Muhammad* the *jizyah* is only applicable until the descent of ʿIsa. He will kill the *Dajjal*, an ugly, evil blasphemer who claims himself as God, and who misleads many people to blaspheme. Prophet ʿIsa will perform *Hajj* and travel to visit the grave of the Prophet to salute him, and to greet him by saying, "*As-salamu ʿalaykum ya rasulAllāh*", as narrated by *Abu Dawūd at-Tayalisiyy* and others.

During his time, the people of *Yaʿjūj* and *Maʿjūj* will appear and cause great destruction to the earth and devastation to the Muslims. Prophet ʿIsa will take the believers to Mount *at-Tur* to supplicate *Allāh* there to relieve them from these people. *Allāh* will answer their *duʿāʾ* and destroy all the people of *Yaʿjūj* and *Maʿjūj*. After that, Prophet ʿIsa will rule the Muslims and there will be a time

71 when peace, comfort, and safety will prevail. Prophet ʿIsa will live for forty (40) years on earth after he descends. He will marry and have children. Then, he will die and be buried. ʿAdullāh Ibn Salām said, "It is written in the original Torah that Prophet ʿIsa will be buried next to Prophet Muḥammad" (in the chamber of Lady ʿĀʾishah.)

CONCLUSION

Prophet ʿIsa was a messenger of Allāh revealed to convey to the people the religion of Islām and to call them to worship Allāh, their Creator. Muslims believe in his prophethood and in his truthfulness in conveying that message. Prophet ʿIsa is alive now, living in the second heaven, worshipping Allāh. He will return to earth before the Day of Judgment and will rule the world. Peace be upon this respected, honored and beloved Messenger of Allāh.

Praise be to Allāh, and Allāh knows best.

Verse #33 of Surat Maryam means:

[Peace was on me the day I was born. Peace will be on me on the day I will die and on the day I am raised alive again.]

Jesus existed according to historians

The question of the existence of Jesus as a historical figure is distinct from the study of the historical Jesus which goes beyond the analysis of his historicity and attempts to reconstruct portraits of his life and teachings, based on methods such as biblical criticism of gospel texts and the history of first century Judea.

Virtually all modern scholars of antiquity agree that Jesus existed, and most biblical scholars and classical historians see the theories of his non-existence as effectively refuted. In antiquity, the existence of Jesus was never denied by those who opposed Christianity. Robert E. Van Voorst states that the idea of the non-historicity of the existence of Jesus has always been controversial, and has consistently failed to convince virtually all scholars of many disciplines. There is, however, widespread disagreement among scholars on the details of the life of Jesus mentioned in the gospel narratives, and the agreement on his existence does not include agreement on his divinity.

Although a very small number of modern scholars argue that Jesus never existed, that view is a distinct minority and virtually all scholars consider theories that Jesus' existence was a Christian

72 invention as implausible. Christopher Tuckett states that the existence of Jesus and his crucifixion by Pontius Pilate seem to be part of the bedrock of historical tradition, based on the availability of non-Christian evidence. Graham Stanton states that "Today nearly all historians, whether Christians or not, accept that Jesus existed".

A number of ancient non-Christian documents, such as Jewish and Greco-Roman sources, have been used in historical analyses of the existence of Jesus. These include the works of 1st century Roman historians Josephus and Tacitus. Josephus scholar Louis H. Feldman has stated that "few have doubted the genuineness" of Josephus' reference to Jesus in Antiquities 20, 9, 1 and it is only disputed by a small number of scholars. Bart D. Ehrman states that the existence of Jesus and his crucifixion by the Romans is attested to by a wide range of sources, including Josephus and Tacitus.

The Mishnah (c. 200) may refer to Jesus and reflect the early Jewish traditions of portraying Jesus as a sorcerer or magician. Other possible references to Jesus and his execution may exist in the Talmud, but they also aim to discredit his actions, not deny his existence.

Scholars generally agree that Jesus was a Galilean Jew who was born between 7 and 2 BC and died 30–36 AD. However, in a review of the state of modern scholarship, Amy-Jill Levine stated: "Beyond recognizing that 'Jesus was Jewish' rarely does scholarship address what being 'Jewish' means."

Most scholars hold that Jesus lived in Galilee and Judea. The Talmud refers to "Jesus the Nazarene" several times and scholars such as Andreas Kostenberger and Robert Van Voorst hold that some of these references are to Jesus. Nazareth is not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible and the Christian gospels portray it as an insignificant village, John 1:46 asking "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Craig S. Keener states that it is rarely disputed that Jesus was from Nazareth, an obscure small village not worthy of invention. Gerd Theissen concurs with that conclusion.

The languages spoken in Galilee and Judea during the first century include the Semitic Aramaic and Hebrew languages as well as Greek, with Aramaic being the predominant language. Most scholars agree that during the early part of the first century, Aramaic was the mother tongue of virtually all women in Galilee and Judea. Most scholars support the theory that Jesus spoke Aramaic and that he may have also spoken Hebrew and Greek.

Most scholars reject that there is any evidence that an adult Jesus traveled or studied outside Galilee and Judea. Robert Van Voorst states that modern scholarship has "almost unanimously agreed" that claims of the travels of Jesus to Tibet, Kashmir or India contain "nothing of value".¹

A page from a 1466 copy of Antiquities of the Jews

The writings of the 1st century Romano-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus include references to

73 Jesus and the origins of Christianity. Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, written around 93–94 AD, includes two references to Jesus in Books 18 and 20.

Of the two passages the James passage in Book 20 is used by scholars to support the existence of Jesus, the Testimonium Flavianum in Book 18 his crucifixion. Josephus' James passage not only attests to the existence of Jesus as a historical person but that some of his contemporaries considered him the Messiah.

The passage deals with the death of "James the brother of Jesus" in Jerusalem, and given that works of Josephus refer to at least twenty different people with the name Jesus, Josephus clarifies that this Jesus was the one "who was called Christ". Louis Feldman states that this passage, above others, indicates that Josephus did say something about Jesus.

Modern scholarship has almost universally acknowledged the authenticity of the reference in Book 20, Chapter 9, 1 of the *Antiquities* to "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James" and considers it as having the highest level of authenticity among the references of Josephus to Christianity.

The *Testimonium Flavianum* (meaning the testimony of Flavius [Josephus]) is the name given to the passage found in Book 18, Chapter 3, 3 of the *Antiquities* in which Josephus describes the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus at the hands of the Roman authorities. Scholars have differing opinions on the total or partial authenticity of the reference in Book 18, Chapter 3, 3 of the *Antiquities* to the execution of Jesus by Pontius Pilate, a passage usually called the *Testimonium Flavianum*. The general scholarly view is that while the *Testimonium Flavianum* is most likely not authentic in its entirety, it is broadly agreed upon that it originally consisted of an authentic nucleus with a reference to the execution of Jesus by Pilate which was then subject to Christian interpolation. Although the exact nature and extent of the Christian redaction remains unclear there is broad consensus as to what the original text of the *Testimonium* by Josephus would have looked like.

The references found in *Antiquities* have no parallel texts in the other work by Josephus such as the *Jewish War*, written 20 years earlier, but some scholars have provided explanations for their absence, e.g. that the *Antiquities* covers a longer time period and that during the 20 year gap between the writing of the *Jewish Wars* (c. 70 AD) and *Antiquities* (after 90 AD) Christians had become more important in Rome and were hence given attention in the *Antiquities*.

A number of variations exist between the statements by Josephus regarding the deaths of James and the New Testament accounts. Scholars generally view these variations as indications that the Josephus passages are not interpolations, for a Christian interpolator would have made them correspond to the Christian traditions, not differ from them.

Muhammad existed according to evidences:

The main source on Muhammad's life are Muslim sources written in Arabic, which include the Qur'an and accounts of Muhammad's life written down by later Muslims, based on oral traditions. These sources are known as sīra and hadith.

There are also non-Muslim sources written in Greek, Syriac, Armenian, and Hebrew by the Jewish and Christian communities. These non-Muslim written sources go back to about 636 AD and many of the interesting ones date to within some decades later. One, attributed to a 7th-century Armenian scholar Sebeos, states that Muhammad was a merchant and that his preaching revolved around the figure of Abraham. There are also confirmations of Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina in them. However, they also contain some essential differences with regard to Muslim sources and in particular about chronology and about Muhammad's attitude towards the Jews and Palestine.

It is notoriously difficult to know anything for sure about the founder of a world religion. Just as one shrine after the other obliterates the contours of the localities in which he was active, so one doctrine after another reshapes him as a figure for veneration and imitation for a vast number of people in times and places that he never knew.

In the case of Mohammed, Muslim literary sources for his life only begin around 750-800 CE (common era), some four to five generations after his death, and few Islamicists (specialists in the history and study of Islam) these days assume them to be straightforward historical accounts. For all that, we probably know more about Mohammed than we do about Jesus (let alone Moses or the Buddha), and we certainly have the potential to know a great deal more.

There is no doubt that Mohammed existed, occasional attempts to deny it notwithstanding. His neighbours in Byzantine Syria got to hear of him within two years of his death at the latest; a Greek text written during the Arab invasion of Syria between 632 and 634 mentions that "a false prophet has appeared among the Saracens" and dismisses him as an impostor on the ground that prophets do not come "with sword and chariot". It thus conveys the impression that he was actually leading the invasions.

Mohammed's death is normally placed in 632, but the possibility that it should be placed two or three years later cannot be completely excluded. The Muslim calendar was instituted after Mohammed's death, with a starting-point of his emigration (*hijra*) to Medina (then Yathrib) ten years earlier. Some Muslims, however, seem to have correlated this point of origin with the year which came to span 624-5 in the Gregorian calendar rather than the canonical year of 622.

If such a revised date is accurate, the evidence of the Greek text would mean that Mohammed is the founder of a world religion who is attested in a contemporary source. But in any case, this source gives us pretty irrefutable evidence that he was an historical figure. Moreover, an Armenian document probably written shortly after 661 identifies him by name and gives a recognizable account of his monotheist preaching.

(Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

The Scientific Fact:

Thus, this system of quarantine, in which all the people of the city that suffers from plague are prevented from leaving, and visitors are also prevented from entering, has now been established worldwide. In the 15th century, plague hit Europe causing the death of a quarter of its citizens. At that time, plagues and contagious diseases were much less in the Muslim world.

At the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as before and after his time until Pasteur managed to discover the existence of microbes, people used to think that diseases were caused by devils, demons, and stars. That is they were not related to cleanliness or certain behaviors; thus, they resorted to sorcery and magic as a remedy.

In such an environment, the Prophet (peace be upon him) established the system of quarantine which is considered the basis of modern preventative medicine after the discovery of the microbes that cause diseases and plagues. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered his Companions: "If you hear of an outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter it; but if the plague breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place." In order to make sure that his order would be carried out properly, he (peace be upon him) established a wall around the area of the plague and promised those who are patient and stay in the area of the plague with the reward of the martyrs, and those who run away from it were promised doom and perdition. Thus, he (peace be upon him) said: "He who runs away from the place of the plague is like the one running away from fighting in the cause of Allah and he who forbears it and stays where he is, he will be rewarded with the reward of a martyr."

If a healthy person was asked two hundred years ago to stay with the sick people in a plague area, he would have considered this some kind of nonsense and in response to his desire to live he would have run away to another place. Only Muslims did not run away and leave at the time of plague in compliance with the order of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Non-Muslims mocked them for this act until it was later discovered that those who appear to be healthy with no symptoms, are the germ carriers who might transfer the plague to another place if they moved to it. They would move freely and mingle with healthy people, so they might cause them to catch the disease.

Who told the Prophet (peace be upon him) this fact? Could a human being know something like this fourteen centuries ago, or is it revelation from the All-Knowing, the Almighty Allah. Allah, the Almighty, says:

[And say, O Muhammad, to these polytheists and pagans, 'All the praises and thanks be to Allah. He will show you His signs and you shall recognize them. And your Lord is not unaware of what you do.'] (An-Naml: 93)

By: admin

Abu Mas'ud (A.S.) narrated that Allah's Messenger said:

"The sun and the moon do not eclipse because of someone's death but they are two signs amongst the signs of Allah. Whenever you see these eclipses invoke Allah, pray, exclaim, (Allah is Most Great) and give charity."

'A'ishah (A.S.) narrated that, "There was a solar eclipse during the life-time of Allah's Messenger (PBUH). The Prophet (PBUH) led the people in prayer, and stood up and performed a lengthy recital during the prayer. Then bowed for a long while (made a long *Ruku*). He stood up again and performed another long recital of the Qur'an, but this time the period of standing (*Qiyam*) was shorter than the first one. He bowed again for a long time but shorter than the first one (*Ruku*), then he prostrated and prolonged the prostration. He did the same in the second *Rak'ah* as he did in the first and then finished the prayer. By then the sun (eclipse) had cleared. He delivered the *Khutbah* (sermon) and after praising and glorifying Allah, he said:

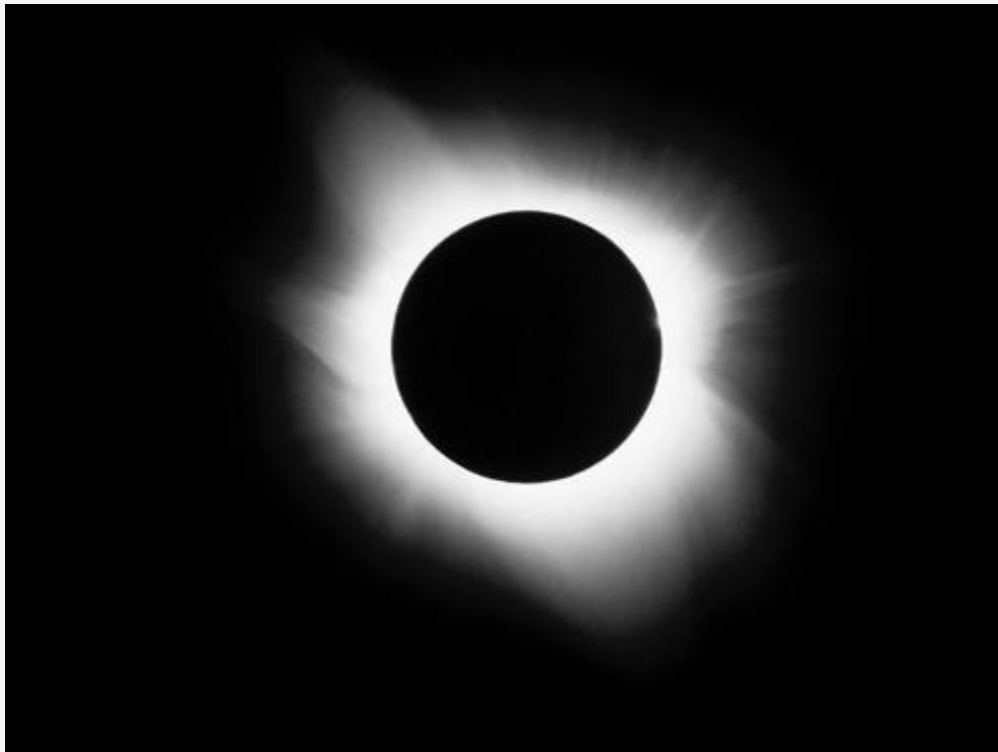
"The sun and the moon are two signs from amongst Allah's signs and they do not eclipse because of the death or life of anyone. Therefore, whenever you see an eclipse, remember Allah and say Takbir (exclaim, Allah is Most Great), pray and give Sadaqah (charity)."

Explanation of the Hadith

A solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between the sun and the earth, which causes a total or partial solar eclipse. A total eclipse takes place in a limited zone on that part of the earth directly facing the sun, at which the sunlight dims to resemble bright moonlight within a few minutes. To the north and south of this band or zone, a partial eclipse takes place. The part of the sun , which eclipses keep getting smaller as we get away from the total eclipse band towards the direction of the two poles .

"The sun and the moon do not eclipse because of the death or life (i.e. the birth) of someone but they are two signs amongst the signs of Allah."

This means that they are two cosmic phenomena, which frequently occur, regardless of the death or life (i.e. birth) of anyone, contrary to what some people used to claim in the Arab Peninsula and other parts of the world. They used to relate the occurrence of these cosmic phenomena to the birth or death of a great person. The Prophet (PBUH) in this Hadith totally denies all of these superstitions, and assures that they are cosmic phenomena, which recur frequently.



Islam deals with ECLIPSE as cosmic phenomena

Science has proven that the moon is followed by a conical shadow, called the umbra, as it blocks the sunrays. In its movement around the earth, the moon's conical shadow passes along with it. At the time of conjunction, which occurs once every lunar month, the moon

79 falls exactly in the middle between the sun and the earth, thus blocking its light totally or partially. Nevertheless, in most of the lunar months, the moon's shadow does not reach the earth, while passing between it and the sun and in such case the sunlight is not blocked. Hence, no eclipse takes place. That is why total solar eclipses are very rare. Sometimes during a solar eclipse the moon falls in the middle between the earth and the sun, and the visible sun narrows to a thin crescent, and the corona appears. At the moment before totality, brilliant points of light, called Baily's beads, flash out.

When the total eclipse takes place, the sky becomes completely dark and the stars become visible in the middle of the day. So in a few minutes, broad daylight turns into what looks like the night, which causes a feeling of panic and depression, not only for human beings, but for all creatures. Birds shelter in their nests, and animals hide in their dens, or get into a state of cautious stillness.

As for the lunar eclipse, it takes place when the earth, being between the sun and the moon, casts a long, conical shadow, called the umbra, with an area of partial shadow called the penumbra around it. This is a phenomenon, which can be observed from all parts of the earth. In most months, the moon passes above or under the umbra, the conical shadow of the earth, and does not enter it. Thus, the lunar eclipse does not take place. During the solar eclipse, the solar energy that reaches the earth decreases and hence the temperature of the earth drops. However, during the lunar eclipse, the solar energy, which reaches the earth increases, causing the temperature of the earth to relatively increase for a few minutes. Since these phenomena are very accurately calculated, the earth is exposed to extreme dangers that only Allah knows how grave they are. That is why the Prophet (PBUH) asked Muslims to invoke Allah, the Almighty, praise Him, exclaim, "Allah is Most Great", and glorify Him. Moreover, the Prophet asked Muslims to pray and pay charity, praying that Allah will protect the earth and its inhabitants from these dangers.

This is the reason why the Prophet (PBUH) said in other narrations of the same Hadith: "*Rush to prayer*" and in another narration he said:

"These signs sent by Allah do not occur because of the life or death of somebody, but Allah

80 *frightens His worshippers with them. So when you see anything thereof, rush to invoke Allah, pray to Him and ask for His forgiveness."*

One cannot help wondering how the Prophet (PBUH) could attain such accurate scientific facts, more than fourteen hundred years ago, at a time when people were up to their ears in superstitions and myths. It really is an explicit proof of the Prophet's Divine Message.

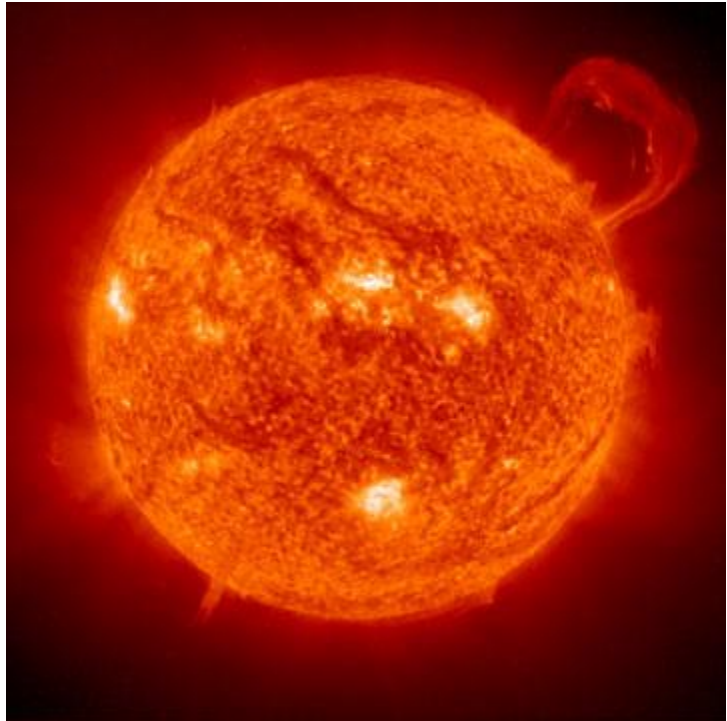
Sunnah & Science

By: Dr. Zaghloul El-Naggar

THE SUN: NEVER CEASE NOR DISAPPEAR

Ibn 'Abbas (R.A.) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) was asked:

"Where does the sun set, and where does it rise from? The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) answered, "It is going in a (nonstop) regular motion; it does not cease or disappear. It sets in one place and rises in another, and sets in another place and rises elsewhere and so on. So, some people would say the sun has set and others would say it has just risen (at the same moment)."



Explanation of the Hadith

This hadith refers to the fact that there is a continuous alternate sunrise and sunset on earth. This could only take place if the earth is spherical or spheroid, and is, at the same

81 time, continuously rotating round its axis facing the sun. This motion pattern leads to the continuous alternation of day and night on its surface, until life on earth comes to an end, i.e. until the Day of Resurrection.

One of the most prominent phenomena linked to this spherical shape of the earth, is that there are different places of sunrise and sunset for different zones of the globe. Each of the sun, the moon and other celestial bodies, sets somewhere in the globe and rises in another. They are all rotating, regularly, in fixed orbits, which they never leave or depart from. Truly, Allah says:

(...They all float, each in an orbit.) (Surat Ya-Sin: 40).

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) talked about all these cosmic facts in such accurate scientific style at a period of time when people thought that the earth was flat and stationary. This is definitely one of the signs, which testifies to the truthfulness of the message of Muhammad (PBUH). For sure, no one in the Arabian Peninsula at the time of revelation, and for centuries to follow realized the fact that the earth is spherical and that it rotates around its axis facing the sun. Needless to say that at that time, no one was able to perceive the real or the apparent motion of the moon, the sun and other celestial bodies, as Arabia was but a simple and primitive environment.

The Glorious Qur'an refers to the spherical shape of the earth and its axial rotating, and to its revolving in its orbit around the sun. The Qur'an refers to these issues in many verses but in a subtle implicit way which may not astound the Bedouins in the desert of the Arabian Peninsula at the time of revelation, but still keeps the scientific fact in context.



Sun does not cease or disappear

Among these verses are the following:

Allah the Almighty says:

(He has created the heavens and the earth with truth. He makes the night to go in the day and makes the day to go in the night. And He has subjected the sun and the moon. Each running (on a fixed course) for an appointed term. Verily, He is the All-Mighty, the oft-Forgiving.) (Surat Az-Zumar (The Groups):5)

- 1. The Glorious Qur'an also confirms in more than one verse that the earth is "spread out" without ending at an edge. This could only be possible if the earth is spherical or spheroid, as the spherical shape is the only shape, which could endlessly be spread out or extended. For example, Allah the Almighty says:**

(And it is He Who spread out the earth, and placed therein firm mountains and rivers...) (Surat Ar-Ra'd (The Thunder): 3)

83 2. The same fact is also assured when the Qur'an refers to the East and the West in different forms. First in the singular, then in the dual form by indicating that there are "Two Easts and Two Wests", and in the plural form by referring to "Easts and Wests". This also emphasizes the fact that the earth is spherical and that it rotates round its axis while facing the sun. These verses also emphasize the fact that the Earth is tilted on its axis and that it does not orbit the sun in a perfect circle.

3. The fact that the earth is spherical in shape is also emphasized by the verses referring to the alternation of night and day. The Glorious Qur'an indicates how Allah makes the 'Night overlap (Kawwar) the Day and the Day overlap the Night' (Surat Az-Zumar: 5). Among the verses that indicate the spherical shape of the earth is the one referring to the passing away of the mountains in the same way the clouds do:

(And you will see the mountains and think them solid, but they shall pass away as the passing away of the clouds...) (Surat An-Naml (The Ants):88)

All of the above facts mentioned in the Qur'an have urged Muslims, at the time of the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun, to measure the circumference of the earth very accurately. Their motive was the firm belief that the earth is spherical and that it rotates around its axis facing the sun. Moreover, the Muslim scholar and scientist "al-Bayyruni" divided the earth into lines of longitude and latitude, in his book: "Tahdid Nihayat al-Amakin li Tas-hih Masafat al-Masakin," which he wrote in 416 A.H (about 1040 A.C.).

The source of all this knowledge is the illuminating signs that are mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), and each of them testifies to the truthfulness and the Divine nature of the Message of the last of the Prophets and Messengers. This accurate scientific knowledge could not be obtained except for a Divine Revelation.

THE MOON CLEFT ASUNDER

Anas ibn Malik (A.S.) narrated that the people of Makkah asked the Prophet (PBUH) to show them a miracle , so he showed them the splitting of the moon , into two distinct parts , that they even saw the mountain of Hira' between them.

Explanation of the Hadith

This incident was narrated by a number of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH), among them were: 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullah ibn Abbas and others. The Indian and Chinese calendars have recorded the incident of the splitting of the moon.



Artistic impression of moon splitting by Prophet Muhammad (SAAS)

85 A few years ago while I was giving a lecture at the Faculty of Medicine at Cardiff University, in Wales, a Muslim asked me a question about the verses at the beginning of Surat al-Qamar (the moon), about the splitting of the moon, and whether it is considered as one of the scientific signs which are mentioned in the Qur'an and whether there is any scientific evidence discovered to explain this incident.

My answer was that this incident is considered one of the most tangible miracles, which took place to support the Prophet (PBUH) when he was challenged by the polytheists and disbelievers of Quraish, showing them this miracle to prove that he is a Messenger of Allah. Anyway, miracles take place as unusual incidents that break all regular laws of nature. Therefore, conventional science is unable to explain how miracles take place, and if they were not mentioned in the Qur'an and in the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), we would not have been obliged to believe in them. Therefore, we believe that the incident of the splitting of the moon took place exactly as the words of Allah Glorified be Who says:

(The Hour has drawn near , and the moon has been cleft asunder . And if they see a sign, they turn away, and say: (This is continuous magic). They belied (this Qur'an), and followed their own lusts. And every matter will be settled [according to the kind of deeds (for the doer of good deeds, his deeds will take him to Paradise, and similarly evil deeds will take their doers to Hell)]. And indeed there has come to them news (in this Qur'an) wherein there is (enough warning) to check (them from evil), Perfect wisdom (this Qur'an), but (the preaching of) warners benefit them not.) (Surat Al-Qamar (The Moon): 1-5)

When I finished my speech, a British man from the audience named Dawud Musa Pidcock, leader of the British Muslim Party, asked to add something to my answer. He said: "It is these verses, at the beginning of surat al-Qamar that made me embrace Islam in the late seventies." This occurred while he was doing extensive research in comparative religion, and one of the Muslims gave him a copy of translation of the meanings of the Qur'an. When he opened this copy for the first

86 time, he came across Surat al-Qamar, and he read the verses at the beginning of the surah, and could not believe that the moon had split into two distinct parts and they were rejoined, so he closed the copy of the translation and kept it aside.

In 1978 Mr. Pidcock was destined by Allah's Will to watch a program about space journeys, in which the well-known British announcer Jamed Burke, received three of the American space scientists. During the debate, the announcer kept criticizing the immoderate spending by NASA (millions of Dollars) on space projects, while there are millions of people on earth suffering from starvation, diseases and ignorance. The answer of the space experts came to assert that it was these journeys that made it feasible to develop important technology applied in medical diagnosis and treatment, industry, agriculture, and many other fields. During this debate, they referred to the first time that a human being landed on the surface of the moon, and how this trip cost more than \$100 million dollars. The scientists went on to say that this journey proved a scientific fact, that if they had spent several times as much as they did to convince people with it, no body would have believed them. This fact was that the moon had been split a long time ago and rejoined, and there is a lot of concrete evidence on the surface of the moon to prove this.



This oblique view of the Moon's surface was photographed by the Apollo 10 astronauts in May of 1969. Center point coordinates are located at 13 degrees, 3 minutes east longitude and 7 degrees, 7 minutes north latitude. One of the Apollo 10 astronauts attached a 250mm lens and aimed a handheld 70mm camera at the surface from lunar orbit for a series of pictures in this area.

Mr. Pidcock went on to say : " When I heard this , I jumped off my chair , and said this is a miracle which took place fourteen hundred years ago to support

88 Muhammad , and the Qur'an narrates it in such a detailed way . After this long period and during the age of science and technology, Allah employs people (non-Muslims) who spent all this money for nothing but to prove that this miracle had actually happened. Then, I said to myself, this must be the true religion, and I went back to the translation of the meanings of the Qur'an, reading it eagerly. It was these verses at the opening of surat al-Qamar that lie behind my reversion to Islam."



89 (The Hour has drawn near , and the moon has been cleft asunder)

(surat Al-Qamar (The Moon): 1-2)

This happens at a time when some Muslims claim that the splitting of the moon has not yet taken place, and that it is one of the signs of the Hereafter as the opening of the surah says: (The Hour has drawn near.) They are oblivious to the fact that the Prophet (PBUH) said in a hadith narrated by Imam Muslim , on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd that Sahl said : "I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) say :

"I and the Last Hour are (close to each other) like this (and he pointed by joining his forefinger, (one) next to the thumb and the middle finger (together))."

Those who deny the incident of the splitting of the moon, use incorrect evidence to support their opinion as they use the verse in surat al-Isra:

(And nothing stops Us from sending the evidences (proofs , signs) but that the people of old denied them.)

(Surat Al-Isrâ' (The Journey by Night): 59)

This verse is not used in the right context since many perceptible signs and miracles took place during the noble life of the Prophet (PBUH).

Peace and blessings of Allah be upon the seal of Prophets (PBUH) , for whom Allah made the moon split into two parts , twice , as an honor for him and to raise his rank and support his message (among his people) , and left for us a concrete evidence to prove that this splitting did actually take place .

Sunnah & Science

By: Dr. Zaghloul El-Naggar

Grave of Muhammad

Muhammad is buried in the Al-Masjid al-Nabawi ("Mosque of the Prophet") in the city of Medina in Saudi Arabia. It should be noted that while non-Muslims regard Muhammad as the founder of Islam, Muslims see him as the final prophet of a pre-existing religion.^[1]

Muhammad's grave lies within the confines of what used to be his wife Aisha's and his house. During his lifetime it adjoined the mosque, which was expanded during the reign of Caliph al-Walid I to include his tomb.^[2] Muhammad is buried next to the first two caliphs, Abu Bakr and Umar. Umar was gifted a spot next to Muhammad by his wife Aisha, which she had intended for herself.

Muhammad's grave itself cannot be seen as the area is cordoned off by a gold mesh and black curtains. As per Islamic tradition, the grave itself is not embellished or decorated and is two cubits high. The grave is marked by an austere green dome above it, built by the Ottoman Turks, and was earlier white in colour. This dome has become universally emblematic of both Muhammad himself, as well as the city of Medina.

Muhammad's grave is an important reason for the particularly high sanctity of the mosque.

MUHAMMAD'S CHARACTER AND HIGH MORALITY PROVE HIS PROPHETHOOD

Muhammad was the humblest at the zenith of his achievements

If a man's world-admired accomplishments or the wealth and fame he has gained do not change him, if he can remain as humble as he was at the beginning of his career, this shows that person's strength of character, morality and virtue. Despite his unparalleled achievements, which force even his enemies to place him at the top of the greatest men of human history, the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, was poorer and more humble when he entered Makka victoriously than he was at the beginning of his mission.

Those who saw the Messenger would say: 'One with such a face cannot lie.'

One's face reveals one's inner world and character. Those who saw the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, could not help but admire his appearance and, if they were unprejudiced, acknowledge his truthfulness. For example, 'Adbullah ibn Salam, the most renowned Jewish scholar of the time, believed in him at his first sight of him, saying: 'One with such a face cannot lie.'

If a fire-fly claimed that it is the sun, its lie could last only until the sun rises. Turkish people say that a liar's candle only burns till bedtime, meaning that a lie has only a very short life. So, a deceitful one pretending Prophethood will soon be discovered and no one will accept him as a true Prophet.

91 Muhammad's utmost conviction of his cause, together with his sincerity and solemnity prove his Prophethood

Even an insignificant man of small standing, in a small group in a disputed matter of little importance, cannot tell a small but shameful lie openly and comfortably without displaying such anxiety and uneasiness as will make his enemies aware of his deception. Since the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, challenged everybody to come until the Last Day and uttered many important speeches in a large community concerning a great cause, with great ease and freedom, without hesitation or anxiety, with pure sincerity and great solemnity, and in an intense and elevated manner that provoked his enemies, it means that he was certainly a Prophet speaking whatever God revealed to him.

Despite being unlettered, the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, spoke on every issue and has not been contradicted ever since.

It is impossible for an unlettered one to speak on a matter requiring expert knowledge, especially before those with specialized knowledge of that matter. However, despite being unlettered, the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, spoke on every issue from theology and metaphysics to medicine, history, physics and biology and has not been contradicted ever since. Besides, when he was raised up as a Prophet, the arts of literature, eloquence and oratory were at their peak and the Qur'an he received from God challenged all of its opponents to bring the like of a single chapter of its but no one has ever been able to do that. This, again, clearly shows that Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, is a Prophet of God.

Muhammad had to confront all kinds of hardships and persecutions after Prophethood and spent for his cause whatever he had.

For the sake of a deception no one risks his life, wealth and reputation and bears great hardships and persecutions unless he has great aspirations to more wealth and great worldly positions. Before claiming Prophethood, the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, was well off and had a respected place among his community. However, he had to confront all kinds of hardships and persecutions after Prophethood and spent for his cause whatever he had. His enemies slandered him, mocked him, beat him, expelled him from his homeland and waged war on him. He bore all such cruel treatments and hostilities without complaint and asked God Almighty for the forgiveness of even his enemies. The only cause he pursued was to see everybody believing in and worshipping the One God exclusively and thereby prosperous in both worlds and saved from the torments of Hell.

Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, practiced with utmost sincerity and honesty what he communicated to others.

History has witnessed many leading persons who, since they themselves did not practice what they preached or propagated, did not have a large devoted following. Their ideas did not have an enduring effect on people and the systems they established did not last long. However, the Prophet Muhammad,

upon him be peace and blessings, practiced with utmost sincerity and honesty what he communicated to others and was always the first and foremost in obedience to the religion he brought, in worship to the Creator and in avoidance of the religious prohibitions. This shows his full conviction of his cause and that he is a Messenger of God, Who sent him to humanity to guide them to the True Path.

For what reason other than conveying God's Message to people must he have endured all kinds of hardships and persecutions, such as sleeping on earth, suffering hunger for several consecutive days, spending a considerable part of his life on battlefields and military campaigns, being expelled from his homeland, becoming subject to mockeries and insults, etc?

Man acquires an established character until he is thirty and especially after thirty a man's character does not change. Particularly, it is very difficult for one to change his temper and disposition after he is forty. If-God forbid such a thought!- there had been any imperfection and blemish in the character of Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, it would certainly have appeared before his Prophethood. Therefore, no one with a bit of intelligence and fairness, unless he is prejudiced, can accept that one who was never heard tell a lie and witnessed deceive until one was forty, would appear as the worst, meanest trickster of human history after forty.

A lying, deceitful one cannot have a large, dedicated following who are ready to sacrifice themselves for him. Despite being among the five greatest Prophets, Moses and Jesus did not have followers as devoted as Muhammad's Companions.

A lying, deceitful one cannot have a large, dedicated following who are ready to sacrifice themselves for him. Despite being among the five greatest Prophets, Moses and Jesus did not have followers as devoted as Muhammad's Companions. The followers of Moses, upon him be peace, betrayed him when he left them for forty days to receive the Torah on Mount Sinai, and began to worship a golden calf which Samiri made for them. Even after so many years of intellectual and spiritual training in the desert, except for two God-fearing men, they did not obey his order to fight against the Amalekites, the people of Goliath. As for Jesus, upon him be peace, one of his most devoted twelve followers betrayed him and attempted to submit him to his enemies. But the followers of Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, known as the Companions, were so devoted to him that they sacrificed for him their lives and properties and their families and tribes. Although brought up among a primitive people and in a climate of ignorance, devoid of any positive notions of social life and administration, without a Scripture and immersed in the darkness of the uncivilized era after the Prophets, in a very short period, they became in the footsteps of their exalted leader, the Prophet Muhammad, the masters, guides and just rulers of the most civilized and socially and politically advanced peoples and states, and ruled the world from east to west in a world-admired fashion.

Also, innumerable exacting and profound scholars and world-famous scientists and pure, spiritual masters were brought up among the succeeding generations following the Companions. The civilization they established was the most magnificent one history has ever known. Is it conceivable, then, that all

those most shining stars of human history followed a lying, deceitful one? God forbid such a thought!

The Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, was the most famous of humanity for high moral conduct and virtue.

The Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, was the most famous of humanity for high moral conduct and virtue. He appeared in the heart of a desert which was almost the most uncivilized part of the then inhabited world and where people were immersed in the worst kinds of immorality. Then, who do you think brought him up as the most virtuous one with the highest morality and best conduct? He had lost his father while he was yet in the womb of his mother. When his mother died, he was only six years old. It was impossible for his grandfather and uncle to bring him up as the most virtuous of all times, as they themselves did not have all of the good moral qualities Muhammad had and in the same degree as he had. His teacher was God, as he himself said: My Lord educated me and taught me good manners, and how well he educated me and how beautifully He taught me good manners!

No one in human history has ever been able to combine in himself all of the virtues and good qualities as perfectly as the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings.

Human history has seen many virtuous persons. However, no one has ever been able to combine in himself all of the virtues and good qualities as perfectly as the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings. There have been many generous people but they have not been able to show enough courage when and where necessary. Likewise, there have been many courageous people, who have not been able to be lenient and generous at the same degree. But the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, combined in his person all the virtues and laudable qualities at the highest level.

Virtue and good morality also require balance. For example, if generosity exceeds its limits, it changes into extravagance. Similarly, if thrift cannot be kept within moderate limits, it changes into miserliness. Courage is usually confused with rashness and dialectics or demagoguery is sometimes taken for being intelligent. In addition, virtue also requires knowing how to act in certain conditions. For instance, the self-respect which a weak man should wear before a powerful one becomes, if the powerful one assumes it, self-conceit. The humility which a powerful man should wear before a weak one becomes, if assumed by a weak man, self-abasement. Forbearance and sacrifice (of one's rights) on one's own account is good and a virtue; but when done on behalf of others, it is bad and a treason. An individual may bear patiently with whatever is done to him personally; but it is impermissible for him to, on behalf of the nation, bear patiently what is being done to the nation. Whereas pride and indignation on behalf of the nation are commendable, on one's own behalf they are not.

The Prophet Muhammad was perfectly balanced in his virtues and good moral qualities.

The Prophet Muhammad was perfectly balanced in his virtues and good moral qualities. He was perfectly courageous where to show courage was necessary, while he was perfectly mild, forgiving and

93 humble among people. He was perfectly dignified but also very gracious. There was no one more generous than him but he was also thrifty and condemned extravagance. In short, all virtues and good qualities existed in him in a well-balanced combination.

Prophet Muhammad had all of the essential attributes pertaining to Prophets

According to theologians, there are six essentials of Prophethood common to all of the Prophets. They are truthfulness, trustworthiness, communication of God's commands, intelligence, infallibility and being free from all kinds of bodily and mental defects. History is a witness that the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, had all of these six essential attributes in a most perfect fashion.

Muhammad's achievements are unparalleled in history

A man encounters in his life many situations where he must make decisions with no delay and hesitation. Many decisions made in such situations may cause him great difficulties. The Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, made so great achievements in so short a time as 23 years that they are unparalleled in human history. He never faltered and all of his decisions proved to be true.

More than that, whatever he did and whatever he said did not concern only his own time but he addressed all times and places and all peoples and levels throughout the world to come until the Last Day. As none of his sayings have not been contradicted so far, no one has ever been able to criticize him for any of his actions, sayings and decisions. Is it possible for one who is not a Prophet taught by God, the All-Knowing, to have such intelligence, foresight, sagacity, insight, sound reasoning and prudence?

HIS ACHIEVEMENTS PROVE MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETHOOD

Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, was peerless in educating people

A man, whoever he is and whatever he does, may regard his own occupation as more important, more necessary, more beneficial to social life and more difficult than others. However, although every occupation has some difficulty of its own and is of some degree of use for social life, educating people must be much more difficult than others and more necessary for a healthy social life.

To bring up distinguished persons require distinguished educators. Only an educator who has established his aim in educating people and practices what he will teach and advise to his students, only one who knows the character, potentialities, desires, and ambitions of his students with the shortcomings and strong and weak spots and the level of learning and understanding of each, can be successful in educating people. Of course, this is not all that a good, successful educator must have. Furthermore, he must know how to treat his students in all circumstances, how to approach their problems and how to purify them of bad qualities and morals and, in place of them, inculcate laudable and good ones.

94 A man may have strong belief in what he must believe but he may not be practicing his belief in his daily life. He may have some good moral qualities but they might have not been an ingrained part of his character. Moreover, he may have certain weak spots such as taking bribery and insensitivity to making use of common property or hoarding up wealth. Therefore, if an educator can change his students completely and, purifying them of all bad habits and morals and all bad qualities which have long been ingrained in them and, in their place, establishing laudable ones, can form a community which will be a good example for future generations in all fields of life and good moral qualities, if an educator can transform the 'rock, copper, iron and coal' in his hand into 'silver, gold, brilliant and diamond', without doubt, you will conclude that that educator is an extraordinary one. What the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, achieved in educating people within so short a time as 23 years is much more than what that educator does.

Prophet Muhammad was matchless in knowing people each with his character

It is another important dimension of a good education is not to resort to force. Penal sanctions, coercion and military and police forces can have some effect on directing people but only to a slight degree and for a short time only. Therefore, convincing people of the truth of what we teach to them and making it approved by them wholeheartedly is of vital importance in a good education.

No one in world history has so far been able to know man with all the dimensions of his character as well as the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, and there has never appeared a second one next to him who has made pitiless, crude, war-mongering, ignorant and unyielding individuals into a community which sets a perfect example for all the future generations in all aspects of life and good moral qualities.

Prophet Muhammad guided people in every aspect of life

No one can guide people in every field of life. It is very difficult for one, however able and clever, to be both an able statesman and commander and a brilliant scientist and successful educator at the same time. However, the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, was the most perfect spiritual and intellectual master, the most able statesman and commander, the most efficient educator, and the greatest scholar history has ever seen.

Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, is the foremost in practicing all the forms of worship prescribed by his religion and the most God-fearing of people.

The Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, is the foremost in practicing all the forms of worship prescribed by his religion and the most God-fearing of people. He observed the duties of worship with the utmost care and attention down to their minutest details even in most perilous circumstances of his life which passed in constant struggle and activity. He never imitated anyone in his worship and combined in a perfect fashion the

He is also unparalleled in prayer and gnosis, for in his supplications and prayers he describes his Lord with such a degree of gnosis that all the gnostics and saints since his time have never been able, although those coming after have made use of the heritage of the preceding ones, to attain a similar degree of gnosis and description of God.

Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, was absolutely convinced of the truth of his message

He had in his faith so extraordinary a strength, so wonderful a certainty, so miraculous an evolution, and such elevated and world-enlightening conviction that none of the prevailing ideas and beliefs of that time, and none of the philosophies of the sages and teachings of the spiritual leaders, although they were all opposed and even hostile to him, was ever able to cause in him any doubt, hesitation or anxiety concerning his certainty, conviction, and assurance. Moreover, all saintly men of all times, his Companions primarily included, have all benefited from his faith which they admit to be of the highest degree. This fact proves that his faith too is matchless.

All the sacred attributes, miracles and functions that indicate the truthfulness and Messengership of the Prophets, peace be upon them all, were all to be found in Muhammad in the utmost degree.

Just as the consensus of the Prophets is a very strong proof of the existence and Oneness of God, so, too, it is a firm testimony to the truthfulness and Messengership of Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings. For history confirms that all the sacred attributes, miracles and functions that indicate the truthfulness and Messengership of the Prophets, peace be upon them all, were all to be found in Muhammad in the utmost degree. The Prophets verbally predicted his coming, that is, they gave the good tidings of him in the Torah, the Gospels, the Psalms, and other Scriptures which are called 'Pages' in the Qur'an; likewise through their missions and miracles they affirmed and 'sealed' the mission of Muhammad, who is the foremost and most perfect in Prophethood.

Thousands of saints unanimously bear witness to the truthfulness and Messengership of Muhammad

Also, having attained the truth and perfection, and the rank of working wonders, and gained insight into the reality of things, and spiritual discovery through following the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, in all his deeds and principles, thousands of saints unanimously bear witness not only to the Oneness of God but also to the truthfulness and Messengership of that being, upon him be peace and blessings. It is as bright a proof as the sun for the truthfulness of Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, that, those saints believe in and affirm all of the truths that being proclaimed through the light of faith to

96 the degree of either certainty coming from knowledge or certainty by sight, or of certainty by experience.

Thousands of exacting scholars of purity, meticulous scholars of truthfulness and believing sages have reached the highest station of learning through the teaching contained in the sacred truths brought by the Prophet Muhammad

Again, thousands of exacting scholars of purity, meticulous scholars of truthfulness and believing sages, who have reached the highest station of learning through the teaching contained in the sacred truths brought by the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, despite his being unlettered, the sublime sciences to which he gave birth, and the Divine knowledge he discovered, not only prove unanimously with their strongest proofs and affirm the Oneness of God, the foundation of his mission, but also bear unanimous witness to the truthfulness of that greatest teacher and supreme master, and to the veracity of his words.

First and foremost of all, the family and the Companions of the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, who with their insight, wisdom and spiritual accomplishments, are the most renowned, the most respected, the most celebrated, the most pious, the most keen-sighted of mankind after the Prophets, after having examined and scrutinized all the thoughts and states of that being, whether hidden or open, with the utmost attention and exactitude, unanimously concluded that he was the most truthful, the most elevated, and the most honest being in the world.

In his preaching of the message and calling people to the truth, Muhammad displayed extraordinary steadfastness, firmness and courage

In his preaching of the message and in his calling people to the truth, he displayed such steadfastness, firmness and courage that, in spite of the antagonism of big powers and great religions, and of his own people and tribe, even of his uncle, he never showed even the slightest trace of hesitation, anxiety or fear, and he successfully challenged the world, and, as a result, made Islam superior to all other religions and systems. This proves that there is not and cannot be anyone like him also in his preaching of and calling to the message of Truth.

Muhammad solved social, political and economic problems so easily and established such perfect rules in all these fields that they left permanent and unerasable imprints on all centuries and in the corners of the world.

Let us go to the Arabian peninsula in the Time of Happiness. That unlettered man who had not attended any military academy, nor a school for civil servants or a school of law, nor a school of sciences, presented such a religion and law that they contain all the principles to secure happiness in both worlds. His speech is so effective and penetrating that human beings in all times listen to him and his voice is echoed in every century. He solves all social, political

97 and economic problems so easily and establishes such perfect rules in all these fields that they leave permanent and unerasable imprints on all centuries and in the corners of the world. He spends a considerable part of his life on battlefields and proves to be the most able commander of all times. He also shows himself as the best of husbands, the most eminent, yet most compassionate of fathers and the most amiable and loyal of friends. He does all this in so short a time as 23 years.

Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, is also beyond all compare in knowing his people and educating them to mould their characters in the crucible of his message

A leader must know his people very well in order to educate them and urge them to the realization of a cause. Alexis Carrel, a great French scientist and philosopher of this century, still describes man as unknown. Man is the most complex and intricate of creatures. However, the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, is also beyond all compare in knowing his people and educating them to mould their characters in the crucible of his message. He knew everyone to whom he would convey his message with all the details of his character, with his abilities, shortcomings, feelings, disposition and level of understanding. Besides, he also knew very well how to act in certain conditions and was able to give the best decision in all crises. To every position he appointed the one most qualified for and deserving of it and did not have to change the appointment later. He succeeded in bringing the most refined, well-mannered and civilized society out of an extremely backward, uncivilized and rough people.

Muhammad equipped and adorned the desperate, wild and unyielding peoples of the seventh-century Arabian peninsula with all the praiseworthy virtues, and made them teachers of all the world and masters, especially, to the civilized nations

Consider how, eradicating their evil and savage customs and immoral qualities to which they were so fanatically attached, he equipped and adorned the desperate, wild and unyielding peoples of the seventh-century Arabian peninsula with all the praiseworthy virtues, and made them teachers of all the world and masters, especially, to the civilized nations. His was not an outward domination; rather, he conquered their minds, spirits, hearts, and souls. He became the beloved of hearts, the teacher of minds, the trainer of souls, and the ruler of spirits.

Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, removed numerous ingrained habits from large obsessed communities with a little effort over a very short period of time, and in their place implanted and inculcated exalted qualities in such a way that they became inherent in their being.

You know that despite all the advanced techniques and methods, modern communities are unable to remove permanently so small a vice as cigarette smoking. However, the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, removed numerous ingrained habits from

98 large obsessed communities with a little effort over a very short period of time, and in their place implanted and inculcated exalted qualities in such a way that they became inherent in their being. To those who refuse to see the testimony of the blessed age of the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, we present as a challenge any part of today's civilized world. Let them go there with hundreds of philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and pedagogues and educators, and strive for a hundred years, I wonder whether they will be able to achieve in that period a hundredth part of what the Prophet Muhammad achieved in a year.

When the Prophet began preaching his Message, he had to face severe opposition, but he confronted all the opposition with a smile on his lips.

When the Prophet began preaching his Message, he had to face severe opposition, but he confronted all the opposition with a smile on his lips. Once, the leaders of the Quraysh warned Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle, to persuade his nephew to abandon preaching his mission. The Prophet answered:

O uncle! Should they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, so as to make me renounce this mission, I shall not do so. I will never give it up; either it will please God to make it triumph or I shall perish in the attempt.

The faith, perseverance and resolution, with which Prophet Muhammad carried his mission to ultimate success, is an eloquent proof of the supreme truth of his cause

On another occasion, a deputation of the leading Quraysh called on him and offered him all the worldly glory they could imagine in return for his abandoning his mission. They said:

- If you want to possess wealth, we will amass for you as much as you wish; if you aspire to win honor and power, we are prepared to swear allegiance to you as our overlord and king; if you have a fancy for beauty, you shall have the hand of the most beautiful maiden of your own choice.

The terms were extremely tempting for any ordinary mortal, but they had no significance in the eyes of the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings. He responded:

- I want neither wealth nor power. God has commissioned me as a warner to humanity. I deliver His Message to you. Should you accept it, you shall have felicity in this life and eternal bliss in the life Hereafter. Should you reject the Word of God, surely God will decide between you and me.

The faith, perseverance and resolution, with which he carried his mission to ultimate success, is an eloquent proof of the supreme truth of his cause. Had there been the slightest doubt or uncertainty in his heart, he would never have been able to brave the storm that continued in

None of the world leaders have been able to bring about among the members of their followers so strong a unity of belief, thought and ideal as that which the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, realized among the desert men of the seventh-century Arabia

Great leaders have appeared on the horizon of humanity. They have changed the course of history through either the states or empires they have established or the revolutions they have made. Nevertheless, almost none of them have been able to bring about among the members of their followers so strong a unity of belief, thought and ideal as that which the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, realized among the desert men of the seventh-century Arabia. Although Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, had never given any indication of political interest or activity for full forty years until Prophethood, he appeared all of a sudden on the stage of the world as such a great political reformer and statesman that, without the aid of press or of any modern tele-communicative means, he brought together the scattered inhabitants of a desert of twelve hundred thousand square miles-a people who were warlike, ignorant, unruly, uncultured, and plunged in tribal warfare-under one banner, one law, one religion, one culture, one civilization and one form of government.

Prophet Muhammad conquered minds and hearts and promised his followers nothing other than God's approval and Paradise

A leader must know men very well in order to urge them to the realization of a cause. In order to gain a following, most leaders make alluring promises to people, like power, wealth, position or a bright future. However, the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, made no such promises to his followers. Nor did he resort to any force to realize his aim. He conquered minds and hearts and promised his followers only God's good pleasure and Paradise. His followers sacrificed themselves in his way willingly and preferred to live a poor life in return for gaining God's good pleasure and Paradise. Especially his own family lived as the poorest of his community. He always sought to prepare them, as well as his Companions, for the eternal peace and permanent bliss while himself setting for them a good example of that peace and bliss. His daughter Fatima, the most beloved to him among his family, once came to him with a necklace around her neck or a bracelet around her wrist. The Prophet said to her:

- Do you want people-inhabitants of the earth and the inhabitants of heavens-to say that the daughter of the Prophet is wearing a chain from Hell?

These words were enough for Fatima, for they were coming from the mouth of one whose throne was established in people's hearts and who had conquered their minds. Fatima

- I immediately sold the necklace, bought a slave and emancipated him, and then went to the Messenger of God. When I told him what I had done, he rejoiced. He opened his hands and thanked God, saying: *All thanks to God, Who protected (my daughter) Fatima from Hell.*

Despite all the most pitiless cruelties, Prophet Muhammad used to pray: 'O God! Forgive them and guide them to truth, for they do not know.' Through his limitless love, compassion, forgiveness and tolerance, he made extremely cruel, war-mongering people into the best community in human history.

Supposing you are a teacher at a school or a director in an institution. In order to bring up your students or the people under your command according to the ideal you pursue, you are determined to bear all hardships that may appear before you. Now, if they spit in your face when they are passing by you, if they put an animal abdomen over your head while you are in prostration before God, if they sometimes slap you in face, if they sometimes throw stones at you and scatter thorny plants along the roads you pass, if they ambush you in corners with daggers in their hands, if they mock you in front of others, if they slander your wife, if they kill your relatives and cut their bodies into pieces, if they attack you many times and injure you, and if they expel you from your native land, still can you bear all such cruelties and continue your way without the least hesitation? More than that, can you forgive them, pity them and pray to God for them, saying: *O God! Forgive them and guide them to truth, for they do not know.* If you are taken to a Paradise-like place and left free to choose between living there and going back to serve your cause amid hardships, do you choose to go back among the people to continue your mission?

Is it not the worst form of 'blindness' and ignorance to reject the Prophethood of that pride of humanity who, through his limitless love, compassion, forgiveness and tolerance, made extremely cruel, war-mongering people into the best community in human history?

In human history there has been no one as much loved as his followers from the first day up to now love the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings.

The Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, sent a group of envoys to the Adal and al-Qarah tribes to teach them Islam. However, a group from the Hudhayl tribe attacked the envoys half-way and, killing some of them, submitted the remaining three to the Quraysh. Zayd ibn Dasina was among the envoys. Before the Qurayshi polytheists executed Zayd, Abu Sufyan, who had not yet embraced Islam, said to him:

- I adjure you by God, Zayd, don't you wish that Muhammad was with us now in your place so that we might cut off his head, and that you were with your family?

- 'By God', said Zayd, 'let alone wishing that Muhammad were here in my place so that I were

with my family, I do not wish that even a thorn should hurt his feet in Madina.'

Abu Sufyan had to remark: 'I swear by God that I have never seen a man who was so loved as Muhammad's Companions loved him.'

In human history there has been no one as much loved, as his followers from the first day up to now love the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings.

Prophet Muhammad answered all of the questions asked him without faltering and he has not been contradicted ever since

The Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, had to answer innumerable questions put to him by both the desert men of Arabia and the Jews and Christians of his time, concerning not only religion but also many other subjects such as history, metaphysics, astronomy, medicine and so on. He answered all of them without faltering and he has not been contradicted ever since.

Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, brought into history such a law, a religion, a way of life, a code of worship, a way of prayer, a message, and faith that the like of them has never existed, nor will or could exist.

The Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, brought into history such a law, a religion, a way of life, a code of worship, a way of prayer, a message, and faith that the like of them has never existed, nor will or could exist. For the law brought by that unlettered being is matchless in that it has administered one fifth of mankind for fourteen centuries, in a just and precise manner through its rules and injunctions. The religion of Islam, which originated in the Qur'an he received from God and his own sayings, precepts and example, is also peerless, for in each century it has been for hundreds of millions of people a guide and a competent authority or source for whatever matter is referred to it. It has also trained their minds, illumined and purified their hearts, trained and refined their souls, and perfected their spirits.

After the Companions, hundreds of thousands of saints and purified, meticulous scholars, thousands of scientists, and hundreds of thousands of literary geniuses, commanders and statesmen have been brought up in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad

After the Companions, who gave the lead to all mankind in all fields of life including the scientific, political, social, administrative and economic, hundreds of thousands of saints and purified, meticulous scholars such as Abu Hanifa, Shafi'i, Bayazid al-Bistami, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, Imam Ghazali, Imam Rabbani, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and many others, and thousands of scientists like al-Biruni, al-Zahrawi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Haytham and others, and hundreds of thousands of literary geniuses, commanders and statesmen, and other stars of mankind, have all followed in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace

102 and blessings. Besides those persons, many intellectuals and statesmen of the West such as Lamartine, William Muir, Edward Gibbon, John Davenport, L. A. Sedillot, Goethe, P. Bayle, Stanley Lane-Poole, A. J. Arberry, Thomas Carlyle, Rosenthal, Elisee Reclus, Andrew Miller, Bismarck, Leopold Weis, Marmaduke Pickthall, Martin Lings and Roger Garaudy have had to confess his greatness, even that he is the greatest of mankind, and some of them have embraced Islam. This is another proof of his Prophethood.

Twelve Proofs that Muhammad is a True Prophet

By Shaykh `Abdul Rahman `Abdul Khaliq

My brothers and sisters everywhere! With this essay, I am not singling out the adherents of Islam - to which I ascribe - but rather I am writing this essay to every man and woman throughout the whole world.

I ask Allah that He facilitates tat this essay reaches every ear, falls under the sight of every eye, and is understood by every heart...

Muhammad the son of `Abdullah is Allah's Prophet and the Final Messenger Sent by Allah to the Inhabitants of Earth.

My brothers and sisters everywhere! You should know that the Messenger, Muhammad the son of `Abdullah (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) is Allah's Messenger in reality and truth. The evidences that show his veracity are abundant. None but an infidel, who out of arrogance alone, could deny these signs.

Among these proofs:

1. Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) was raised illiterate, unable to read or write, and remained like that till his death. Among all his people, he was known as being truthful and trustworthy. Before receiving revelation, he had no prior knowledge of Religion or any previously sent Message. He remained like that for his first forty years. Revelation then came to Muhammad with the Koran that we now have between our hands. This Koran mentioned most of the accounts found in the previous scriptures, telling us about these events in the greatest detail as if he witnessed them. These accounts came precisely as they were found in the Torah sent down to Moses and in the Gospel sent down to Jesus. Neither the Jews or Christians were able to belie him regarding anything that he said.

2. Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) also foretold of everything that would occur to him and his community after him, pertaining to victory, the removal of the tyrannical kingdoms of Chosroes [the royal title for the Zoroastrian kings of Persia] and Caesar, and the establishment of the

103 religion of Islam throughout the earth. These events occurred exactly as Muhammad foretold, as if he was reading the future from an open book.

3. Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) also brought an Arabic Koran that is the peak of eloquence and clarity. The Koran challenged those eloquent and fluent Arabs of his time, who initially belied him, to bring forth a single chapter like the Koran. The eloquent Arabs of his day were unable to contest this Koran.

Indeed, till our day, none has ever dared to claim that he has been able to compose words that equal-or even approach-the order, grace, beauty, and splendor of this Glorious Koran.

4. The life history of this Noble Prophet was a perfect example of being upright, merciful, compassionate, truthful, brave, generous, distant from all evil character, and ascetic in all worldly matters, while striving solely for the reward of the Hereafter. Moreover, in all his actions and dealings, he was ever mindful and fearful of Allah.

5. Allah instilled great love for Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) in the hearts of all who believed in and met him. This love reached such a degree that any of his companions would willingly sacrifice his (or her) self, mother or father for him.

Till today, those who believe in Muhammad honor and love him. Anyone of those who believe in him would ransom his own family and wealth to see him, even if but once.

6. All of history has not preserved the biography of any person in the manner it has preserved the life of Muhammad, who is the most influential human in history.

Nor has the entire earth known of anyone whom every morning and evening, and many times thereafter throughout the day, is thought of by those who believe in him. Upon remembering Muhammad, the believers in him will greet him and ask Allah to bless him. They do such with full hearts and true love for him.

7. Nor has there every been a man on earth whom is still followed in all his doings by those who believe in him.

Those who believe in Muhammad, sleep in the manner he slept; purify themselves (through ablution and ritual washing) in the manner he purified himself; and adhere to his practice in the way they eat, drink, and clothe themselves.

Indeed in all aspects of their lives, the believers in Muhammad adhere to the teachings he spread among them and the path that he traveled upon during his life.

During every generation, from his day till our time, the believers in this Noble Prophet have fully adhered to his teachings. With some, this has reached the degree that they desire to follow and adhere to the Prophet's way in his personal matters regarding which Allah has not sought of them to adhere to in worship. For example, some will only eat those specific foods or only wear those specific garments

Let alone all that, all those who believe in Muhammad repeat those praises of Allah, special prayers, and invocations that he would say during each of his actions during day and night, like: what he would say when he greeted people, upon entering and leaving the house, entering and leaving the mosque, entering and leaving the bathroom, going to sleep and awaking from sleep, observing the new crescent, observing the new fruit on trees, eating, drinking, dressing, riding, traveling and returning from travel, etc.

Let alone all that, all those who believe in Muhammad fully perform-even to the minute detail-every act of worship-like prayer, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage-as this Noble Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) taught and as he himself performed.

All of this allows those who believe in him, to live their lives in all aspects with this Noble Messenger as their example, as if he was standing before them, for them to follow in all their doings.

8. There has never been nor will there ever be a man anywhere upon this earth who has received such love, respect, honor, and obedience in all matters-small and large alike-as has this Noble Prophet.

9. Since his day, in every region of the earth and during every period, this Noble Prophet has been followed by individuals from all races, colors and peoples. Many of those who followed him were previously Christians, Jews, pagans, idolaters, or without any religion. Among those who chose to follow him, were those who were known for their sound judgment, wisdom, reflection, and foresight. They chose to follow this Noble Prophet after they witnessed the signs of his truthfulness and the evidences of his miracles. They did not choose to follow Muhammad out of compulsion or coercion or because they had adopted the ways of their fathers and mothers.

Indeed many of the followers of this Prophet (may Allah's blessings peace be upon him), chose to follow him during the time when Islam was weak, when there were few Muslims, and when there was severe persecution of his followers on earth. Most people who have followed this Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) have done so not to acquire some material benefits. Indeed many of his followers have suffered the greatest forms of harm and persecution as a result of following this Prophet. Despite all this harm and persecution, this did not turn them back from his religion.

My brethren! All of this clearly indicates to anyone possessing any sense, that this Prophet was truly and really Allah's messenger and that he was not just a man who claimed prophethood or spoke about Allah without knowledge.

10. With all this, Muhammad came with a great religion in its credal and legal make-up.

Muhammad described Allah with qualities of complete perfection, and at the same time in a manner that is free of ascribing to Him any imperfection. Neither the philosophers or the wise could ever describe Allah like such. Indeed it is impossible to imagine that any human mind could conceive of an existing being that possesses such complete ability, knowledge, and greatness; Who has subdued the

105 creation; Who has encompassed everything in the universe, small or large; and Who possesses such perfect mercy.

Nor is it in the ability of any human being to place a perfect law based upon justice, equality, mercy and objectivity for all human activity on earth like the laws that Muhammad brought for all spheres of human activity - like buying and selling, marriage and divorce, renting, testimony, custody, and all other contracts that are necessary to uphold life and civilization on earth.

11. It is impossible that any person conceive wisdom,, morals, good manners, nobleness of characters as what this honorable Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) brought.

In a full and complete manner, Muhammad spread a teaching regarding character and manners toward one's parents, relatives, friends, family, humanity, animals, plants and inanimate objects. It is impossible for the human mind alone to grasp all of that teaching or come with a similar teaching.

All of that unequivocally indicates that this Messenger did not bring any of this religion from his own accord, but that it was rather a teaching and inspiration that he received from the One Who created the earth and the high heavens above and created this universe in its miraculous architecture and perfection.

12. The legal and credal make-up of the religion that the Messenger, Muhammad, (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) brought resembles the engineering of the heavens and the earth. All of that indicates that He who created the heavens and the earth is the One Who sent down this great law and upright religion.

The degree of inimitability of the Divine law that was sent down upon Muhammad is to the same degree of inimitability of the Divine creation of the heavens and earth. For just as humanity cannot create this universe, in the same manner humanity cannot bring forth a law like Allah's law that He sent down upon His servant and messenger Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him).

Conclusion:

Many people knew him since he was born but he wasn't too famous yet. And his famous two nick names before becoming a prophet is "Al-sadek (the honest) , and Al-Amien (the trust)".

His house is still there in Saudi Arabia& his Grave in Saudi Arabia. No doubt he existed for someone to leave huge remarks like these he is for sure existed. For those who read the Quran in its original language know that this book is a miracle and it's not a human language. Many nations during Muhammad time have heard of Him, and heard of his prophecy message. He was sending letters and

messengers to many countries/trips calling them toward Islam. Some of his letters still exists. Physical evidence that I can think of his existence is his beard hair in turkey. Also he has a grave. There are plenty of historical records that indicate the prophet was a real person. In fact one of their sects only recognizes his descendants as persons of religious authority. Remember this is an illiterate man. And one of the proofs is that the moon was cut in half and science approves this. The people who didn't believe in Muhammad asked him to give them a miracle and they will believe and they asked him to cut the moon in the half and Muhammad asked god to do what they want and god did it but some people still didn't believe that he was a prophet of God but instead called him a magician. So, yes Muhammad did exist & he performed miracles with the help of God just like Jesus . And there are many evidences that not only prove Muhammad existed but also prove he was a prophet of God . So, Moses, Jesus & Muhammad were all prophets of 1 God.

Part 2

Information arranged & organized by Mr. Faisal Fahim

Introduction of the author MR.FAISAL:

Can we discover God? What does science prove? Why we were never told the facts of science & world religions? These are some questions & thoughts the author had couple of years ago. So, he began his search. During his research he looked through many different kinds of books, scriptures, Torah, Bible, Quran, biological & scientific books, world religions, history, online searches, similarities & differences of various faiths & many more informations. In his search for revealing God's true religion he organized many informations & created this book. It's book of comparative religions + religion & science.

(UNLEASHING THE DISCOVERY OF GOD!!!)

Top 10 Informations you can learn in this book & why it's a must read book of knowledge for all: 1. God definitions of various religions. 2. What does Islam say about terrorism? 3. women in various religions. 4. Is evolution proven by logic & science? 5. what does science say of Quran, Bible & Torah 6. The similarities & differences of world's major religions. 7. Discoveries of scientific miracles in a scripture. 8. Both science with religion & science vs religion. 9. Moses, Jesus & Mohammad in Islam & Christianity. 10. A documentary book on Islam, Christianity, Judaism & science.

A RESEARCH PROJECT & A DOCUMENTARY BOOK ON SCIENCE & WORLD RELIGIONS & COMPARATIVE INTERFAITH DISCUSSIONS

Message from the author: My intention is not to criticize any one's believe. It's okay to agree or disagree with my book. This entire book is not totally written by me. It is based on a research project done by me. The book is as the title goes. The information is arranged & organized by me & all sources of all documents or information is mentioned inside the book. Purpose of my book is to share the knowledge which is available in many sources & I have mentioned them in the book. Hope you enjoy & share my book. "The greatest creation of god is us. The true race of us the 1 & only us, all of us the mankind simply 1 race of humanity. Love is the only antidote of hate. so, love, peace & God bless for all. knowledge is not only power but it is indeed freedom to speak out the truth of an existence and I will share it to set it free. Thank you for reading my work. God bless planet earth & America"

Information arranged & organized by Mr.Faisal

This book is available on www.createspace.com , & www.amazon.com

Allah (swt) Says : "Invite to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur'an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided." [Quran 16:125]
Allah also says ""Who is better in speech than one who calls to Allah, works

righteousness, and says: I am of those who bow in submission?" (Quran 41:33) **Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:** "If Allah guides a person through you, it is better for you than all that is on the earth." (Bukhari No. 2783 & Muslim No. 2406). **Convey (my teachings) to the people even if it were a single sentence**" (Sahih Bukhari, Vol.4, Hadith 667)

"Therefore listen not to the Unbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness, with the (Qur'an)". 25.52 Quran

Yet do they worship, besides Allah, things that can neither profit them nor harm them: and the disbeliever is a helper (of Evil), against his own Lord! 25.55 Quran

And I have sent you only as a giver of good news and as a warner. 25.56

Say: "No reward do I ask of you for it but this: that each one who will may take a (straight) Path to his Allah." 25.57 Al-Quran

"Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers." (Quran, al-Baqarah: 159)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "For Allah to guide one man through you is better for you than all that the sun has shined over".

The Prophet (PBUH) has said: "Whoever guides [another] to a good deed will get a reward similar to the one who performs it."

[Saheeh Muslim]

THE QURAN PROVES WATER CAME FROM ROCKS FROM THE SPACE (by FAISAL)

Scientists don't know for sure. Perhaps the most popular theory says that, shortly after the Earth formed, millions of asteroids and comets, saturated in water, slammed into the planet, releasing their payloads to form Earth's oceans. Scientists are working hard to understand more about what our planet was like billions of years ago, and each new piece of information moves us closer to understanding how Earth's oceans, lakes and rivers came to exist. But the Quran already has the answer because the Quran is more superior than science & it's the only 100% true book of God's words. Thenceforth were your hearts hardened: They became like a rock and even worse in hardness. For among rocks there are some from which rivers gush forth; others there are which when split asunder send forth water; and others which sink for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unmindful of what ye do. 2:74 al-Baqarah Verse: 74 AL-QURAN.

On the authority of Abu Malik al-Harith bin Asim al-Asharee (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Purity is half of iman (faith). 'Al-hamdu lillah (praise be to Allah)' fills the scales, and 'subhan-Allah (how far is Allah from every imperfection) and 'Al-hamdulillah (praise be to Allah)' fill that which is between heaven and earth. And the salah (prayer) is a light, and charity is a proof, and patience is illumination, and the Qur'an is a proof either for you or against you. Every person starts his day as a vendor of his soul, either freeing it or causing its ruin." It was related by Muslim.

**This is a all in 1 Rough,Peacefull,Honest & Open Minded book on
God,Sciense,Islam,Christianity & Judaism.**

1

The Qu'ran The Final Evidence They Don't Want You To Know

Introduction of the book:

Allah has promised to keep The Quran same until the Day of Judgment & challenged humans to create another accurate book like Quran & said if you can't, surrender to your lord (the only way of peace& heaven). Quran is word of god & it has the information of past, present& future. God reveled to Prophet Muhammad whatever god wanted to & kept some information only to god by reveling some & not reveling some. But still Quran is 1 great source of information from God.

Do Muslims worship the Mecca? No Muslims bow towards the direction of mecca & worship only 1 God Allah. While praying in a mosque if Muslims will not have a direction they will end up praying facing or towards each other .The Quran & Prophet Muhammad taught us to bow towards the direction of mecca while we only pray & worship Allah. And it's also important for the unity of Muslims.

Jesus preached in Aramaic, and parts of the Old Testament and much of the rabbinical literature were written in that language. "El-law" or "El-lawh" in Aramaic means "GOD", while "Eloi" in Aramaic means "My GOD" as Jesus used the word "Eloi" when he was put on

the cross and said "My GOD My GOD why have you forsaken me? (Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani?)....(Mark 15:34)"

In Arabic, "GOD" means "Allah", and "My GOD" means "Ilahi" or "Elahi" which is derived from the word "Allah".1. "**elahn**" is the way the word "hhla" (spelled from right to left as it is Aramaic) is pronounced.

2. The words "Elahn", "hhla (read from right to left)" and "Allah" all have the "h" letter and pronunciation in them.

3- "Allah" in Arabic is pronounced as "Al-lawh" or "Al-lah" depending on the sentence that it is p18 used in. In Arabic, the sound of the word "Allah" could be thicker (Allawh) or thinner (Allah) depending on the sentence.

4- The Aramaic word "hhla (read from right to left)", which is transliterated as "elahn" which means "GOD" is pronounced as "El-aw" as show above.

5- The Aramaic word "hla (read from right to left)", which is transliterated as "elah" which means "oak"

is pronounced as "Ay-law" also as shown above.

Word	Hebrew or Arabic	English Translation
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depending on the sentence that it is used in. In Arabic, the sound of the word "Allah" could be thicker (Allawh) or thinner (Allah) depending on the sentence.

7- The Hebrew word "Elohim" is the plural of "Elowah", which is derived from the Aramaic word "Alaha", or "Elahh"; the same as the Arabic word "Allah" or "Allawh" in pronunciation.

If we pronounce the words "Allah" in Arabic and "Elahh (pronounced as 'El-aw') in Aramaic, then we would hear almost the same exact word.

1-In the case of "Aalah" or "Aaloh" Aramaic slang pronunciation, it is almost the same as the "Allah" or "Allawh" Arabic slang pronunciation.

2- In the case of "Aalahaa" or "Aalohaa" Aramaic slang pronunciation, it is also almost the same as the "Allaha" or "Allawha" in the Arabic slang pronunciation. "Allah" would be pronounced as "Allaha" or "Allaha" in Arabic if it's used in the middle of the sentence. It can also be pronounced as "Allahi" or "Allahu" or "Allaho" depending on the grammar of the sentence.

3- The Hebrew word "Elohim" is the plural of "Elowah", which is derived from the Aramaic word "Alaha", or "Elahh"; the same as the Arabic word "Allah" or "Allawh" in pronunciation.

"Son of God" means "Servant of God" in Hebrew. Bible agrees with Islam, not with pagan trinity: The sections of this article are: 1-Comparison between Hebrew and Arabic.2- "Son of God" is the same as "Servant of God" in Hebrew! 3- Articles with detailed proofs about "Son of God" means "Servant of God" in Hebrew.4- Conclusion.

1- Comparison between Hebrew and Arabic: In this article, I will prove that the Bible's "Son of GOD" translation is wrong, because it literally means "Servant of GOD" as Islam clearly defines it. I have shown sample evidence from Hebrew below. The following definitions were taken from: <http://www.thebabycorner.com/pregnancy/babynames/find.php?sex=boy&begin=a>

Word	Hebrew or Arabic	English Translation
Abbott	Hebrew	Father
Abb	Arabic	Father
Abel	Hebrew	Breath or Son of
Abd	Arabic	Servant of or Slave of

Important Note: Since "Abd" means "Servant of" in Arabic, and "Abel" means "Breath of" in Hebrew, then this means "Abel" in Hebrew could also mean "Servant of" or "Creation of", since it literally also means "Breath of".

The following Hebrew words and their definitions were taken from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God

Ben	Hebrew	Son of
Bin	Arabic	Son of (as in Osama bin Laden)
Benie Elohim	Hebrew	Sons of GOD
Beni	Arabic	People of (as in Bani Israel, People of Israel)

Important Note: Since "Beni" in Arabic means "People of", then this means that "Benie" in Hebrew also means "People of" or "Group of", or "Belongings of", which was falsely translated as "Sons of"

Page3

throughout the entire Bible!

"In the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

This literature contain a few passages in which the title "son of God" is given to the Messiah (see Enoch, cv. 2; IV Esdras vii. 28-29; xiii. 32, 37, 52; xiv. 9); but the title belongs also to any one whose piety has placed him in a **filial relation to God** (see Wisdom ii. 13, 16, 18; v. 5, where **"the sons of God" are identical with "the saints"**; comp. Eccclus. [Sirach] iv. 10).

In Judaism, it is through such personal relations that the individual becomes conscious of God's fatherhood, and gradually in Hellenistic and rabbinical literature "sonship to God" was ascribed first to every Israelite and then to every member of the human race (Abot iii. 15, v. 20; Ber. v. 1; see Abba). In one **midrash**, the Torah is said to be God's "daughter" (Leviticus Rabbah xx.)"

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God)**Important Note:** "filial relation to God" means that a person or creation has a special place in GOD Almighty's Sight. Also, "sons of God" being identical with "the saints" means that the term "son of God" is not an accurate one in the sense of being physically or biologically "part of GOD" or "Son of GOD" respectively as the trinitarian Christians falsely claim. Also, "In one midrash, the Torah is said to be God's "daughter", further proves my point that "Son of GOD" today in the English bibles don't mean more than a "Creation of GOD" or "Servant of GOD"; perhaps a very dear or special servant of GOD Almighty, as the Torah was also called "daughter of GOD".

2- "Son of God" is the same as "Servant of God" in Hebrew!"In modern English usage, the **Son of God** is almost always a reference to Jesus Christ, whom Christianity holds to be the son of the Christian God, eternally begotten of God the Father and coeternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Human or part-human offspring of deities are very common in other religions and mythologies, however. For example in the Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the earliest recorded legends of humanity, Gilgamesh claimed to be of both human and divine descent. **Another well-known son of a god and a human is Hercules.**

A great many pantheons also included genealogies in which various gods were descended from other gods, and so the term "son of god" may be applied to many actual deities as well."(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God)**Important Note:** So as we can see, the "Son of GOD" theory originally comes from pagan Greek origins. And since most of the Bible's New Testament was written in Greek, then it had been without a doubt negatively influenced by such pagan theology, where Jesus being called "Son of GOD" is literally interpreted today as "part of GOD" or the "Creator of the Universe".

P4 "In the Hebrew Bible Israel is both a man (Jacob, the son of Isaac) and the nation that descended from him. Because of the shared name and organic identity, God speaks to the nation as though he were a single person. Israel is, in fact, God's son (Exod 4:22 — **beni vechori yisrael**; Deut 14:1 — **banim atem l'Adonai**; Jer 31:9 — **ki hayiti le'yisrael le'av**; Hosea 11:1 — **mimitzrayim qarati livni**). Israel's Father nurtures him to grow up and become a worshiping servant (Exod 4:23 — "Let my son go that he may serve me")." (<http://www.hebrew-streams.org/works/hebrew/eved-adonai.html>)

Important Note: Here we see when Israel became GOD Almighty's "son", he reached the point of being GOD Almighty's "servant". This means that "son of GOD" is nothing but a "Servant of GOD" as clearly defined in Islam. It doesn't at all mean that the individual is part of GOD Almighty, or he is GOD the

Father Himself.

This is further proven in this quote:

"The Inner Son Rescues His People

Read together, these texts make clear that the Plan (**etzah**) is set in God's mind. He will use the anointed one — and his circle of faithful-to-God disciples — as his agent for bringing rebellious Israel back to his sonship calling.

YHVH formed me from the womb to be His Servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
in order that Israel might be gathered to Him.

It is too small a thing that you should be
my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob,
and to restore the preserved ones [**netzurim**] of Israel . . . (Isa 49:5, 6)

It's worth noting that the apostles Paul and Barnabas quoted this passage in reference to themselves, as being members of the Messiah's Remnant Israel (Acts 13:46-48; cf. Luke 2:32).

Thus, within the writings of Isaiah we observe the tensions, paradoxes, and hopes for fixing what is broken — **both within God's servant people and in the creation as a whole**. To accomplish this there are two who **serve the Lord**, two with the title "Eved." "

(<http://www.hebrew-streams.org/works/hebrew/eved-adonai.html>)

Important Note: Again, we see that the Son of GOD's main responsibility is to Serve GOD Almighty and to Worship Him alone. So a Son of GOD is basically a Servant of GOD. Also, Jesus being called "Son of GOD" is also no different. Him being the "Son of GOD" means he is a Servant of GOD Almighty, or Abdallah, since "Abd" means "Servant of" and "Allah" means "GOD" or "The Supreme GOD Almighty above all gods".

3- Articles with detailed proofs about "Son of God" means "Servant of God":

Below are a list of articles that clearly prove from Hebrew resources that "Son of God" also means "Servant of God".

Article #1:

(Emphasis below is mine) **Is Jesus "God's Son" or "God's Servant?" Do you see a difference between these two Bible versions?**

<p>King James Version Acts 3:25 - Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.</p> <p>Acts 3:26 - Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.</p>	<p>New King James Version Acts 3:25 - You are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.</p> <p>Acts 3:26 - To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you away from his iniquities.</p>
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In the KJV, we find that Jesus is God's Son. In the NKJV, we find that He is God's servant. These are clearly not the same! The Greek word found in the text here is "pais". It can be used in Greek for either "son" or "servant." So which one is correct here? The solution is simple: look at the context in which it is used. In English, we have many words that can have more than one meaning. If a translator, going from English to another language, came across the word "bear," he would have a choice of meanings. But it wouldn't take rocket science to figure out which one to use. If the passage described a man with a heavy burden, the translator would understand that the man is going to "bear," or "carry" the burden. If, on the other hand, the passage described a hairy beast climbing a tree, the translator would understand the correct meaning here applies to a forest-dwelling animal that will eat nearly anything it finds. It's not really very hard.

Now look at the Bible passage above. What is being discussed?

- "children of the prophets"
- "covenant which God made with our fathers"
- "in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

It's clear, isn't it? The passage is talking about "children," and "fathers" and "seed." **The word "pais" means "son." But the New King James translators chose "servant."** Why? They were not alone. The New World Translation, created by the Jehovah's Witnesses who deny the deity of Jesus, translated this word "servant" also. **So do the NIV, ASV, NASB and other modern Bible translations.** Could it be that these modern translators disagree that "pais" can be translated "son?" No, the NKJV committee translates this very word as "boy," "child" or "son" in Matthew 2:16; 17:18; 21:15; Luke 2:43; 9:42; and John 4:51. Yet they refused to translate the word as "son" in this powerful sermon where Peter presents Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. One has to ask, why were these translators so determined to deny the deity of Jesus in this passage? Is this a Bible you can trust with your eternal destiny?

1.2.3.15 Jesus is God's servant All of mankind are the servants of God. If a man were to own another man then that man would be his servant. Obviously this servant would be held in a lower regard than this man's own children (or himself).

We do not usually find people telling their sons (or themselves): "*come here my servant,*" or "*Go over there my servant.*" Let us compare this with what God has to say about Jesus (pbuh):

1. **Matthew 12:18:** "*Behold my servant, whom I have chosen.*"
2. **Acts 3:13(RSV):** "*The God of Abraham, and of Isaac,... hath glorified his servant Jesus.*"
3. **Acts 4:27(RSV):** "*For of a truth against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou hast anointed....*"

The Actual Greek word used is "pias" or "paida" which mean; "servant, child, son, manservant." Some translations of the Bible, such as the popular King James Version, have translated this word as "Son" when it is attributed to Jesus (pbuh) and "servant" for most everyone else, while more recent translations of the Bible such as the Revised Standard Version (RSV) now honestly translate it as "servant." As we shall see in later chapters, the RSV was compiled by thirty two Biblical scholars of the highest eminence, backed by 50 cooperating Christian denominations from the "*most*" ancient Biblical manuscripts available to them today. Chances are that no matter what your church or denomination you are able to name, that church took part in the correction of the King James Version of the Bible which resulted in the RSV.

The exact same word "pias" is attributed to Jacob(Israel) in Luke 1:54 and translated as "servant":

"*He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;*." It is also applied to King David in Luke 1:69, and once again, it is translated as "servant":

"*...the house of his servant David;*" (also see Acts 4:25).

However, when it is applied to Jesus (e.g. Acts 3:13, Acts 4:27), NOW it is translated as "Son." (notice that it is not only translated as "son" but as "Son".) Why the double standard? Why the dishonest translation techniques? "*And verily, among them is a party who twist their tongues with the Scripture that you might think that it is from the Scripture but it is not from the Scripture; and they say, 'It is from Allah' but it is not from Allah; and they speak a lie against Allah while [well] they know it!*" The noble Qur'an, A'al-Umran(3):78

"*The Messiah will never scorn to be a servant of Allah, nor will the favored angels. Whosoever scorns His service and is proud, all such will He assemble unto Him; Then as for those who believed and did good works, unto them will he pay their wages in full and shall increase them from His bounty. [But] as for those who were scornful and proud, He shall punish hem with a painful torment, nor will they find for themselves other than Allah any ally or champion*" The noble Qur'an, Al-Nissa(4):172-174

4- Conclusion:As we've seen above, in Hebrew, "Son of God" can also be translated as "Servant of God", which literally means "Abdallah" in Arabic. Abd = Servant, and allah = Allah, or the Supreme GOD Almighty that is above all gods. So, Jesus being called "Son of God" does not mean anything about him being part of GOD or GOD Almighty Himself. It simply means "Servant of God" since Jesus existed among Jews and preached the Gospel to them. Allah Almighty said: "And they say: "(God) Most Gracious has **begotten** offspring." Glory to Him! **they are (but) servants raised to honour.** (The Noble Quran,

21:26)" **page7 God definition By Faisal:** God does not born or die. Who has no beginning or end. Does not need to become human, animal or insect to understand his creation. He is the creator who knows what he has created. He is the most wise. So, he knows everything. He feeds everyone, but he doesn't need to eat or sleep or use toilet. True God is the creator who is not part of the creation. So, he has no father, mother, wife or children. He's above all & unique. There's none like him & he's only one, who has no partner & no gender. So, he's the creator of all creation & not part of his or any creation. That is the definition of one true God in Islam which is Allah. Allah has created the humans in a pair of male & female to worship him & in different colors, languages, countries to respect & recognize each other. Tv, watch, computer, phone everything has a purpose. Purpose of us is not just only to eat, poo, have sex & sleep. purpose of life is to obey & worship the creator because humans are the most superior of creation & our purpose is to serve god by praising & praying. No1 is superior whether you are black or white, arab or non arab, male or female. For god everyone is equal. Islam is the only religion that is against racism. Allah is the most just & God judges you by your heart only not by your looks. Islam is an accurate, just & peaceful religion of 1 god creator lord Allah.

In Quran, It says "If you kill one human being it's as if you have killed the entire of humanity. And if you save one human being. It's as you saved the entire of humanity". So, for killing you go to hell, for saving you go to heaven. There was no suicide bombers in the time of prophet Mohammad. Islam believes God created the first humans were Adam & eve without any father & mother. The devil made them eat a fruit that was told by God to not to eat.

And they got poo, but, they were not allowed to poo in heaven. You can eat everything in heaven & you won't get poo & it's a unholy thing you get it when you eat foods on earth & the 1 forbidden fruit that was in heaven. So, as punishment God sent them to earth. Adam & Eve were married & having sex for married couples is not sin in islam. All humans are children of Adam & eve. In

Islam from Adam to Moses, to Jesus to Mohammad
God sent all of them as messengers prophets & humans to spread the true religion. Because God created Adam & Eve without any father & mother. It means true creator can create everything in any way he wants to, for example If he says something to happen It'll just happen. The same way he made Adam & Eve without being their father & mother plus also having no father & mother. He has the wisdom & power of over everything. Similarity of creating Adam a slight differently he created prophet Jesus as one of the mightiest messengers of God with having just mother without any father. Because God can do anything God can create humans without father & mother as well as having a mother but no father. That's the true miracle & it can only be done by one true creator. And that's the believe of Islam that the

p8 true God is Allah who has no partner, no parents, no children, no wife, doesn't born or die, has no image because there's none like him, does not eat but feeds everyone & does not sleep. In Islam the name of prophet Jesus is Isa. And Jesus/Isa did everything with the power of Allah (God). God gave him the power to do it. Who created Jesus as a messenger of God.

Similarly he created Adam, Moses, Abraham, Noah, Isa as Jesus, Mohammad as messengers of peace & Islam towards humanity. And God can't be part of creation. If it's part of creation then it's not the creator or God or Allah. Even in Bible it says Jesus put his head on the floor as Muslims put their head on the floor for praying. 80% of Quran matches with Science & other 20% of Quran the Science does not have the answers because they haven't discovered or improved that much. For example Quran talks

about heaven, hell, & there are aliens. Science has no answer for everything but Quran has all the answers since last 1400 years even when Science had no answers. In the Bible it talks about Prophet Noah & the story goes something like this that the Prophet received a message from God that there would be a flood all over the world. So, he built a big boat & he took some people & a pair of every animals. According to Science there was not a flood which happened all over the world but it happened in a particular part of earth. Quran also tells it

happened in a particular part of the world. Quran also talks about humans are partly formed from father & partly formed from mother. And today Science agrees with it. So, if some one reads Quran & do a scientific research it'll help to understand

what the truth is & what is fiction. Bible says, the world is flat & circle. Scientifically it's not true. A coin is also flat & circle. Quran tells the original shape of earth. Science can't prove any error in Quran but tells errors on Bible. Don't believe it! Do your own research & believe what's logical. Don't ask people but do your own research so, you can believe in true God the creator of all creation but not a creation. Islam also teaches black cumin cures so many diseases without any side effects. The ultimate goal of saitan (Devil) is to take humans towards hell & shirk. Shirk means to associate or include someone with God. True God has no partner, can't compare him with any creation because he has

p9 created the creation, how can he be part of what he created? Remember true religion should have all the answers Of humanity & should not have any missing links. Islam believes Quran is 100% words of one creator God Allah. People might think there are 2 types of Muslims Shia & Sunni. But they both have same book Quran. And in Quran there is no Sunni or Shia. Islam is one religion & Quran is the

only one book Of God in Islam. The followers of Islam & Quran are called Muslims. No Muslim is a Muslim unless he beliefs Adam, Moses, Abraham, Jesus, Noah, Mohammad were all messengers of

one God Allah. No Muslim is a good Muslim unless he's a good human being. Islam teaches to live peacefully with people of every religion, race, color, language & nationalities. So we should understand, respect& live peacefully with each other. In the last 100 years to now Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. That's why some governments & Medias create lies & misconceptions about Islam. Remember, true religion is the one that answers all the questions of humanity. Science can't prove any error in Quran. And true book of God can't have any errors. Muslims believe Torah & Bible were books of God but they have been changed by humans. So, Quran is the last & final book of God. Quran is only one book but you can find it in all languages. Any one who believes in God should do research on Science, Quran & Bible. Fact is stranger then fiction. The book of God should have all the answers for humanity with no errors & word of God can't have errors!

Question: Does Quran mention that Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet? Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but [he is] the messenger of God and seal(last,finish,end,final) of the prophets and God has the knowledge of everything. (Quran 33:40)

Jesus in islam & quran

“And mention in the Book (the Quran), Mary, when she withdrew in seclusion from her family to a place facing east. She placed a screen

P10 (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her a spirit from Us, (the angel Gabriel), and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects. She said: ‘Verily, I seek refuge with the Most Gracious (God) from you, if you do fear God.’ (The angel) said: ‘I am only a messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son.’ She said: ‘How can I have a son, when no man hath touched me, nor am I unchaste?’ He said: ‘So (it will be), your Lord said That is easy for Me (God): And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (God), and it is a matter (already) decreed (by God).’” (Quran 19:16-21)

“Indeed, the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, then He said to him: ‘Be!’ and he was.” (Quran 3:59)

Muslims, like Christians believe that Jesus performed miracles. These miracles were performed by the will and permission of God, Who has power and control over all things.

“Then will God say: ‘O Jesus the son of Mary! Recount My favor to you and to your mother. Behold! I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit (the angel Gabriel) so that you did speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. Behold! I taught you the Book and Wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel. And behold: you make out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My leave, and you breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by My leave, and you heal those born blind, and the lepers by My leave. And behold! You bring forth the dead by My leave. And behold! I did restrain the Children of Israel from (violence to you) when you did show them the Clear Signs, and the unbelievers among them said: ‘This is nothing but evident magic.’” (Quran 5:110)

God sent all prophets with miracles specific to the nation to whom they were sent to prove the veracity of their message. These miracles were not performed of their own accord; rather, they were only manifest in their hands by God's will. The miracles performed by Jesus were no different. The Jews

were well advanced in the field of medicine, and the miracles which Jesus brought were of this nature, proving the truth of His message and in order to convince the Jews.

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, ‘God is the Messiah, the son of Mary’ while the Messiah has said, ‘O Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord...” (Quran 5:72)

God says about the belief that Jesus is part of a “Trinity”:

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, ‘God is the third of three.’ (Rather) there is none worthy of worship except One (God). And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment. So will they not repent to God and seek His forgiveness? And God is Forgiving and Merciful. The Messiah (Jesus), son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger before whom many Messengers have passed away; and his mother adhered wholly to truthfulness, and they both ate food (as other mortals do). See how We make Our signs clear to them; and see where they are turning away!” (Quran 5:73-75)

And also:

P11 “O People of the Book (Jews and Christians)! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, and attribute to God nothing except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a Messenger of God, and His command that He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and in His Messengers, and do not say: ‘God is a Trinity.’ Give up this assertion; it would be better for you. For God is indeed (the only) One God. Far be it from His glory that He should have a son. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth. And God is sufficient for a guardian.” (Quran 4:171)

God deems this belief as an enormity against His Essence:

“And they say: ‘The Most Merciful (God) has taken (for Himself) a son.’ Assuredly you utter a hideous thing, whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins; That they ascribe unto the Most Merciful a son, when it is not suitable for (the Majesty of) the Most Merciful that He should take a son. There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Most Merciful as a slave.” (Quran 19:88-93)

On the Day of Judgment, Jesus again will free himself from this false attribution. God gives us a glimpse of what he will say when he is asked about why people worshipped him:

“And (beware the Day) when God will say, “O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, ‘Take me and my mother as deities besides God?’” He will say, ‘Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what you commanded me – to worship God, my Lord and your Lord...” (Quran 5:116-117)

“I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:1-3)

Ascribing a son to God is in clear opposition to that principle for which He created the Creation and sent prophets. God says in the Quran:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Quran 51:56)

He also said:

“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, (saying), ‘Worship God and avoid all false objects of worship...” (Quran 16:36)

“And (remember) when Jesus, son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel, I am the Messenger of God sent to you, confirming the Torah (which came) before me...” (Quran 61:6)

Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus stated:

“Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the (way of) the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

“And when Jesus, son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel! Indeed I am the messenger of God unto you, confirming that which was (revealed) before me in the Torah, and bringing good tidings of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is the Praised One.’” (Quran 61:6)

John 14:16-17: “And I will give you another Counselor to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth.”

It was told by Jesus so it's none other than prophet Mohammad

Crucifixion

“...They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but (another) was made to resemble him to them...” (Quran 4:157)

“God lifted him up to His presence. God is Almighty, All-Wise.”

(Quran 4:158) “No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another.” (Quran 39:7)

“There is not one of the People of the Scripture but will believe in him (Jesus) before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them.” (Quran 4: 159)

SURAT AL IKHLAS (MAKKAH)

- 1) Say he is Allah one & only
- (2) Allah, the eternal, absolute
- 3) He begets not, nor is he begotten
- (4) And there is none like unto him (Al-Quran)

Some References :

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- 6) Read sura Maryam in Quran

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (pbuh) IN THE BIBLE

by Dr. Zakir Naik

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the Old Testament:

The Qur'an mentions in Surah Al-Araf chapter 7 verse 157:

"Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their

1. MUHAMMAD (PBUH) PROPHESED IN THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY:

Almighty God speaks to Moses in Book of Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 18:

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

The Christians say that this prophecy refers to Jesus (pbuh) because Jesus (pbuh) was like Moses (pbuh). Moses (pbuh) was a Jew, as well as Jesus (pbuh) was a Jew. Moses (pbuh) was a Prophet and Jesus (pbuh) was also a Prophet. If these two are the only criteria for this prophecy to be fulfilled, then all the Prophets of the Bible who came after Moses (pbuh) such as Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Malachi, John the Baptist, etc. (pbut) will fulfill this prophecy since all were Jews as well as prophets.

However, it is Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who is like Moses (pbuh):

- i) Both had a father and a mother, while Jesus (pbuh) was born miraculously without any male intervention.

[Mathew 1:18 and Luke 1:35 and also Al-Qur'an 3:42-47]
- ii) Both were married and had children. Jesus (pbuh) according to the Bible did not marry nor had children.
- iii) Both died natural deaths. Jesus (pbuh) has been raised up alive. (4:157-158)

Muhammad (pbuh) is from among the brethren of Moses (pbuh). Arabs are brethren of Jews. Abraham (pbuh) had two sons: Ishmail and Isaac (pbut). The Arabs are the descendants of Ishmail (pbuh) and the Jews are the descendants of Isaac (pbuh).

Words in the mouth:

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was unlettered and whatever revelations he received

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

[Deuteronomy 18:18]

- iv) Both besides being Prophets were also kings i.e. they could inflict capital punishment. Jesus (pbuh) said, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36).
- v) Both were accepted as Prophets by their people in their lifetime but Jesus (pbuh) was rejected by his people. John chapter 1 verse 11 states, "He came unto his own, but his own received him not."
- iv) Both brought new laws and new regulations for their people. Jesus (pbuh) according to the Bible did not bring any new laws. (Mathew 5:17-18).

112. Surah Al-Ikhlaas or At-Tauhid (The Purity)

1. Say (O Muhammad (ﷺ)): "He is Allah, (the) One.
2. "*Allah-us-Samad* (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks).
3. "He begets not, nor was He begotten;
4. "And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him." Quran

(according to historians original bible does not exist) search in google!!!

(The punishment of raping a women in islam is death penalty)!!!

if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind.Quran.

2. It is Mentioned in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 18:19

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not harken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

3. Muhammad (pbuh) is prophesised in the book of Isaiah:

It is mentioned in the book of Isaiah chapter 29 verse 12:

"And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned."

When Archangel Gabrail commanded Muhammad (pbuh) by saying Iqra - "Read", he replied, "I am not learned".

4. prophet Muhammad (pbuh) mentioned by name in the old testament:

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is mentioned by name in the Song of Solomon chapter 5 verse 16:

prophet Muhammad (pbuh) mentioned by name in the old testament: Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is mentioned by name in the Song of Solomon chapter 5 verse 16:"Hikko Mamittakim we kullo Muhammadim Zehdoodeh wa Zehraee Bayna Jerusalem."His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."In the Hebrew language im is added for respect. Similarly im is added after the name of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to make it Muhammadim. In English translation they have even translated the name of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as "altogether lovely", but in the Old Testament in Hebrew, the name of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is yet present.It's majestic plural noun like Elohim which refers to 1 God only.so Muhammadim also refers to 1 Muhammad even though im can refer also to be plural.(Edited by Faisal)

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the New Testament:

Al-Qur'an Chapter 61 Verse 6:

"And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said, 'O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me and giving glad tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmed.' But when he came to them with clear signs, they said, 'This is evident sorcery!' "

All the prophecies mentioned in the Old Testament regarding Muhammad (pbuh) besides applying to the Jews also hold good for the Christians.

1.

John chapter 14 verse 16:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

2.

Gospel of John chapter 15 verse 26:

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit

of truth, which
proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

3.

Gospel of John chapter 16 verse 7:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you".

"Ahmed" or "Muhammad" meaning "the one who praises" or "the praised one" is almost the translation of the Greek word *Periclytos*. In the Gospel of John 14:16, 15:26, and 16:7. The word 'Comforter' is used in the English translation for the Greek word *Paracletos* which means advocate or a kind friend rather than a comforter. *Paracletos* is the warped reading for *Periclytos*. Jesus (pbuh) actually prophesised Ahmed by name. Even the Greek word *Paraclete* refers to the Prophet (pbuh) who is a mercy for all creatures.

Some Christians say that the Comforter mentioned in these prophecies refers to the Holy Sprit. They fail to realise that the prophecy clearly says that only if Jesus (pbuh) departs will the Comforter come. The Bible states that the Holy Spirit was already present on earth before and during the time of Jesus (pbuh), in the womb of Elizabeth, and again when Jesus (pbuh) was being baptised, etc. Hence this prophecy refers to none other than Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

4.

Gospel of John chapter 16 verse 12-14:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth: for he shall not speak

page17 of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me".

The Sprit of Truth, spoken about in this prophecy referes to none other than Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

NOTE: All quotations of the Bible are taken from the King James Version.

The Quran and Modern Science

On Faith, The Holy Quran | by Dr. Maurice Bucaille (Edited by Dr. A. A. Bilal Philips)

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

This booklet by Dr. Maurice Bucaille has been in circulation for the past nineteen years and has been a very effective tool in presenting Islam to non-Muslims as well as introducing Muslims to aspects of the scientific miracle of the Qur'an. It is based on a transcription of a lecture given by Dr. Bucaille in French. In this reprint, I decided to improve its presentation by simplifying the language and editing the text from an oral format to a pamphlet format. There were also passing references made by the author to material in his book, The Bible, the Qur'an and Science, which needed explanation. I took the liberty of including explanatory portions from his book where more detail was necessary. A few footnotes were also added for clarity and a hadeeth which the author mentioned was replaced due to its inauthenticity. There were also some corrections made to the historical material on the compilation of the Qur'an.

It is my hope that these slight improvements will make this excellent work even more effective in presenting the final revelation of God to mankind.

Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips

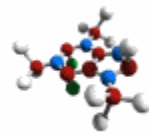
Director/Islamic Information Center Dubai

U.A.E.

May, 1995

INTRODUCTION

On the 9th of November, 1976, an unusual lecture was given at the French Academy of Medicine. Its title was "Physiological and Embryological data in the Qur'an". I presented the study based on the existence of certain statements concerning physiology and reproduction in the Qur'an. My reason for presenting this lecture was because it is impossible to explain how a text produced in the seventh century could have contained ideas that have only been discovered in modern times.



For the first time, I spoke to members of a learned medical society on subjects whose basic concepts they all knew well, but I could, just as easily, have pointed out statements of a scientific nature contained in the Qur'an and other subjects to specialists from other disciplines. Astronomers, zoologists, geologists and specialists in the history of the earth would all have been struck, just as forcibly as medical doctors, by the presence in the Qur'an of highly accurate reflections on natural phenomena. These reflections are particularly astonishing when we consider the history of science, and can only lead us to the conclusion that they are a challenge to human explanation.

There is no human work in existence that contains statements as far beyond the level of knowledge of its time as the Qur'an. Scientific opinions comparable to those in the Qur'an are the result of modern knowledge. In the commentaries to translations of the Qur'an that have appeared in European languages, I have only been able to find scattered and vague references to them. Nor do commentators writing in Arabic provide a complete study of the aspects of the Qur'an that deal with scientific matters. This is why the idea of a comprehensive study of the problem appealed to me. In addition to this, a comparative study of similar data contained in the Bible (Old Testament and Gospels) seemed desirable. Thus, a research project was developed from the comparison of certain passages in the Holy Scriptures of each monotheistic religion with modern scientific knowledge. The project resulted in the publication of a book entitled, *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science*. The first French edition appeared in May 1976. English and Arabic editions have since been published.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE

There is, perhaps, no better illustration of the close links between Islam and science than the Prophet Muhammad's often-quoted statements:

“Seeking knowledge is compulsory on every Muslim.”

“wisdom is the lost property of the believer.”

“whoever follows a path seeking knowledge, Allah will make his path to paradise easy.”

These statements and many others are veritable invitations to humanity to enrich their knowledge from all sources. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to learn that in Islam religion and science have always been considered as twin sisters and that today, at a time when science has taken such great strides, they still continue to be associated. Nor is it a surprise to learn that certain scientific data are used for the better understanding of the Qur'anic text. What is more, in a century where, for many people, scientific truth has dealt a deathblow to religious belief, it is precisely the discoveries of science that, in an objective examination of the Islamic scripture, have highlighted the supernatural nature of revelation and the authenticity of the religion which it taught.

When all is said and done, scientific knowledge seems, in spite of what many people may say or think, to be highly conducive to reflection on the existence of God. Once we begin to ask ourselves, in an unbiased or unprejudiced way, about the metaphysical lessons to be derived

from some of today's knowledge, (for example our evolving knowledge of the smallest components of matter or the questions surrounding the origin of life within inanimate matter), we indeed discover many reasons for thinking about God. When we think about the remarkable organization presiding over the birth and maintenance of life, it becomes clear that the likelihood of it being the result of chance lessens quite considerably.

As our knowledge of science in the various fields expands, certain concepts must seem increasingly unacceptable. For example, the idea enthusiastically expressed by the recent French winner of the Nobel prize for medicine, that living matter was self-created from simple chemical elements due to chance circumstances. Then from this point it is claimed that living organisms evolved, leading to the remarkably complex being called man. To me, it would seem that the scientific advancements made in understand the fantastic complexity of higher beings provides stronger arguments in favor of the opposite theory: that the existence of an extraordinarily

methodical organization presiding over the remarkable arrangement of the phenomena of life necessitates the existence of a Creator.

In many parts of the Book, the Qur'an, encourages this kind of general reflection but also contains infinitely more precise data which are directly related to facts discovered by modern science. It is precisely this data which exercise a magnetic attraction for today's scientists.

The Qur'an and Science

For many centuries, humankind was unable to study certain data contained in the verses of the Qur'an because they did not possess sufficient scientific means. It is only today that numerous verses of the Qur'an dealing with natural phenomena have become comprehensible. A reading of old commentaries on the Qur'an, however knowledgeable their authors may have been in their day, bears solemn witness to a total inability to grasp the depth of meaning in such verses. I could even go so far as to say that, in the 20th century, with its compartmentalization of ever-increasing knowledge, it is still not easy for the average scientist to understand everything he reads in the Qur'an on such subjects, without having recourse to specialized research. This means that to understand all such verses of the Qur'an, one is nowadays required to have an absolutely encyclopedic knowledge embracing many scientific disciplines.

I should like to stress, that I use the word science to mean knowledge which has been soundly established. It does not include the theories which, for a time, help to explain a phenomenon or a series of phenomena, only to be abandoned later on in favor of other explanations. These newer explanations have become more plausible thanks to scientific progress. I only intend to deal with comparisons between statements in the Qur'an and scientific knowledge which are not likely to be subject to further discussion. Wherever I introduce scientific facts which are not yet 100% established, I will make it quite clear.

There are also some very rare examples of statements in the Qur'an which have not, as yet, been confirmed by modern science. I shall refer to these by pointing out that all the evidence available today leads scientists to regard them as being highly probable. An example of this is the

statement in the Qur'an that life has an aquatic origin ("And I created every living thing out of water" Qur'an, 21:30).

These scientific considerations should not, however, make us forget that the Qur'an remains a religious book par excellence and that it cannot be expected to have a scientific purpose per se. In the Qur'an, whenever humans are invited to reflect upon the wonders of creation and the numerous natural phenomena, they can easily see that the obvious intention is to stress Divine Omnipotence. The fact that, in these reflections, we can find allusions to data connected with scientific knowledge is surely another of God's gifts whose value must shine out in an age where scientifically based atheism seeks to gain control of society at the expense of the belief in God. But the Qur'an does not need unusual characteristics like this to make its supernatural nature felt. Scientific statements such as these are only one specific aspect of the Islamic revelation which the Bible does not share.

Throughout my research I have constantly tried to remain totally objective. I believe I have succeeded in approaching the study of the Qur'an with the same objectivity that a doctor has when opening a file on a patient. In other words, only by carefully analyzing all the symptoms can one arrive at an accurate diagnosis. I must admit that it was certainly not faith in Islam that first guided my steps, but simply a desire to search for the truth. This is how I see it today. It was mainly the facts which, by the time I had finished my study, led me to see the Qur'an as the divinely-revealed text it really is.

AUTHENTICITY OF QUR'AN

Before getting to the essence of the subject, there is a very important point which must be considered: the authenticity of the Qur'anic text.

It is known that the text of the Qur'an was both recited from memory, during the time it was revealed, by the Prophet and the believers who surrounded him, and written down by designated scribes among his followers. This process lasted for roughly twenty-three years during which many unofficial copies were made. An official copy was made within one year after the Prophet's death at the instruction of Caliph Abu Bakr.

Here we must note a highly important point. The present text of the Qur'an benefited in its original preparation from the advantage of having its authenticity cross-checked by the text recited from memory as well as the unofficial written texts. The memorized text was of paramount importance at a time when not everyone could read and write, but everybody could memorize. Moreover, the need for a written record was included in the text of the Qur'an itself. The first five verses of chapter al-'Alaq, which happen to constitute the first revelation made to the Prophet (S), express this quite clearly:

“Read: In the name of your Lord who created. Who created man from a clinging entity. Read! Your Lord is the most Noble, Who taught by the pen. Who taught man what he did not know.” Qur'an, 96:1-5

These are surely words in “praise of the pen as a means of human knowledge”, to use Professor Hamidullah's expression.

Then came the Caliphate of 'Uthman (which lasted from the twelfth to the twenty-fourth year following Muhammad's death). Within the first two years of Caliph 'Uthman's rule, seven official copies were reproduced from the official text and distributed throughout a large area of the world which had already come under Islamic rule. All unofficial copies existing at that time were destroyed and all future copies were made from the official seven copies.

In my book, *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science*, I have quoted passages from the Qur'an which came from the period prior to the Hijrah (the Prophet's emigration from Makkah to Madeenah in the year 622) and which allude to the writing of the Qur'an before the Prophet's departure from Makkah.

There were, moreover, many witnesses to the immediate transcription of the Qur'anic revelation.

Professor Jacques Berque has told me of the great importance he attaches to it in comparison p23 with the long gap separating the writing down of the Judeo-Christian revelation from the facts and events which it relates. Let us not forget that today we also have a number of manuscripts of the first written versions of the Qur'an which were from a time period very close to the time of revelation.

I shall also mention another fact of great importance. We shall examine statements in the Qur'an which today appear to merely record scientific truth, but of which men in former times were only able to grasp the apparent meaning. In some cases, these statements were totally incomprehensible. It is impossible to imagine that, if there were any alterations to the texts, these obscure passages scattered throughout the text of the Qur'an, were all able to escape human manipulation. The slightest alteration to the text would have automatically destroyed the remarkable coherence which is characteristic to them. Change in any text would have prevented us from establishing their total conformity with modern knowledge. The presence of these statements spread throughout the Qur'an looks (to the impartial observer) like an obvious hallmark of its authenticity.

The Qur'an is a revelation made known to humans in the course of twenty-three years. It spanned two periods of almost equal length on either side of the Hijrah. In view of this, it was natural for reflections having a scientific aspect to be scattered throughout the Book. In a study, such as the one we have made, we had to regroup the verses according to subject matter, collecting them chapter by chapter.

How should they be classified? I could not find any indications in the Qur'an suggesting any particular classification, so I decided present them according to my own personal one.

It would seem to me, that the first subject to deal with is Creation. Here it is possible to compare the verses referring to this topic with the general ideas prevalent today on the formation of the Universe. Next, I divided up verses under the following general headings: Astronomy, the Earth, the Animal and Vegetable Kingdoms, Humans, and Human Reproduction in particular. Furthermore, I thought it useful to make a comparison between Qur'anic and Biblical narrations on the same topics from the point of view of modern knowledge. This has been done in the cases of Creation, the Flood and the Exodus. The reason that these topics were chosen is that knowledge acquired today can be used in the interpretation of the texts.

CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE

From an examination of creation as described in the Qur'an, an extremely important general concept emerges: The Qur'anic narration is quite different from the Biblical narration. This idea contradicts the parallels which are often wrongly drawn by Western authors to emphasize the resemblance between the two texts. To stress only the similarities, while silently ignoring the obvious dissimilarities, is to distort reality. There is, perhaps, a reason for this.

- When talking about creation, there is a strong tendency in the West to claim that Muhammad copied the general outlines mentioned in the Qur'an from the Bible.
- Certainly it is possible to compare the six days of creation as described in the Bible, plus an extra day for rest on God's Sabbath, with this verse from chapter al-A'raaf.

"Your Lord is God who created the heavens and the earth in six days." Qur'an, 7:54

However, it must be pointed out that modern commentators stress the interpretation of the Arabic word *ayyaam*, (one translation of which is 'days'), as meaning 'long periods' or 'ages' rather than periods of twenty-four hours.

What appears to be of fundamental importance to me is that, in contrast to the narration contained in the Bible, the Qur'an does not lay down a sequence for creation of the earth and heavens. It refers both to the heavens before the earth and the earth before the heavens, when it talks of creation in general, as in this verse of chapter Taa Haa:

“(God) who created the earth and heavens above.” Qur'an, 20:4

In fact, the notion derived from the Qur'an is one of a parallelism in the celestial and terrestrial evolutions. There are also basic pieces of information concerning the existence of an initial gaseous mass (dukhaan) which are unique to the Qur'an. As well as descriptions of the elements which, although at first were fused together (ratq), they subsequently became separated (fatq). These ideas are expressed in chapters Fussilat and al-Anbiyaa:

“God then rose turning towards the heaven when it was smoke” Qur'an, 41:11

“Do the disbelievers not see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then I split them apart?” Qur'an, 21:30

According to modern science, the separation process resulted in the formation of multiple worlds, a concept which appears dozens of times in the Qur'an. For example, look at the first chapter of the Qur'an, al-Faatihah: (“Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds.” Qur'an, 1:1). These Qur'anic references are all in perfect agreement with modern ideas on the existence of primary nebula (galactic dust), followed by the separation of the elements which resulted in the formation of galaxies and then stars from which the planets were born. Reference is also made in the Qur'an to an intermediary creation between the heavens and the earth, as seen in chapter al-Furqaan:

“God is the one who created the heavens, the earth and what is between them...” Qur'an, 25:59

It would seem that this intermediary creation corresponds to the modern discovery of bridges of matter which are present outside organized astronomical systems.

This brief survey of Qur'anic references to creation clearly shows us how modern scientific data and statements in the Qur'an consistently agree on a large number of points. In contrast, the successive phases of creation mentioned in the Biblical text are totally unacceptable. For

example, in Genesis 1:9-19 the creation of the earth (on the 3rd day) is placed before that of the heavens (on the 4th day). It is a well known fact that our planet came from its own star, the sun. In such circumstances, how could anyone claim that Muhammad, the supposed author of the Qur'an, drew his inspiration from the Bible. Such a claim would mean that, of his own accord, he corrected the Biblical text to arrive at the correct concept concerning the formation of the Universe. Yet the correct concept was reached by scientists many centuries after his death.

ASTRONOMY

Whenever I describe to Westerners the details the Qur'an contains on certain points of astronomy, it is common for someone to reply that there is nothing unusual in this since the Arabs made important discoveries in the field of astronomy long before the Europeans. But, this is a mistaken idea resulting from an ignorance of history. In the first place, science developed in the Arab World at a considerable time after the Qur'anic revelation had occurred. Secondly, the scientific knowledge prevalent at the highpoint of Islamic civilization would have made it impossible for any human being to have written

statements on the heavens comparable to those in the Qur'an. The material on this subject is so vast that I can only provide a brief outline of it here.

The Sun and Moon.

Whereas the Bible talks of the sun and the moon as two lights differing only in size, the Qur'an distinguishes between them by the use of different terms: light (noor) for the moon, and lamp (siraaj) for the sun.

“Did you see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other, and made in them the moon a light and the sun a lamp?” Qur'an, 78:12-13

The moon is an inert body which reflects light, whereas the sun is a celestial body in a state of permanent combustion producing both light and heat.

Stars and Planets

The word 'star' (najm) in the Qur'an (86:3) is accompanied by the adjective thaaqib which indicates that it burns and consumes itself as it pierces through the shadows of the night. It was much later discovered that stars are heavenly bodies producing their own light like the sun.

In the Qur'an, a different word, kawkab, is used to refer to the planets which are celestial bodies that reflect light and do not produce their own light like the sun.

“We have adorned the lowest heaven with ornaments, the planets.” Qur'an, 37:6

Orbits Today, the laws governing the celestial systems are well known. Galaxies are balanced by the position of stars and planets in well-defined orbits, as well as the interplay of gravitational forces produced by their masses and the speed of their movements. But is this not what the Qur'an describes in terms which have only become comprehensible in modern times. In chapter al-Ambiyaa we find:

“(God is) the one who created the night, the day, the sun and the moon. Each one is traveling in an orbit with its own motion.” Qur'an,21:33

The Arabic word which expresses this movement is the verb yasbahoon which implies the idea of motion produced by a moving body, whether it is the movement of one's legs running on the ground, or the action of swimming in water. In the case of a celestial body, one is forced to translate it, according to its original meaning, as 'to travel with its own motion.'

In my book, The Bible, The Qur'an and Science, I have given the precise scientific data corresponding to the motion of celestial bodies. They are well known for the moon, but less widely known for the sun.

The Day and Night

The Qur'anic description of the sequence of day and night would, in itself, be rather commonplace were it not for the fact that it is expressed in terms that are today highly appropriate. The Qur'an uses the verb kawwara in chapter az-Zumar to describe the way the night 'winds' or 'coils' itself around the day and the day around the night.

The original meaning of the verb *kis* to coil a turban around the head. This is a totally valid comparison; yet at the time the Qur’an was revealed, the astronomical data necessary to make this comparison were unknown. It is not until man landed on the moon and observed the earth spinning on its axis, that the dark half of the globe appeared to wind itself around the light and the light half appeared to wind itself around the dark.

The Solar Apex

The notion of a settled place for the sun is vividly described in chapter Yaa Seen of the Qur’an:

“The sun runs its course to a settled place That is the decree of the Almighty, the All Knowing.” Qur’an, 36:38

“Settled place” is the translation of the word *mustaqarr* which indicates an exact appointed place and time. Modern astronomy confirms that the solar system is indeed moving in space at a rate of 12 miles per second towards a point situated in the constellation of Hercules (alpha lyrae) whose exact location has been precisely calculated. Astronomers have even give it a name, the solar apex.

Expansion of the Universe Chapter ath-Thaariyaat of the Qur’an also seems to allude to one of the most imposing discoveries of modern science, the expansion of the Universe.

“I built the heaven with power and it is I, who am expanding it.” Qur’an, 51:47

The expansion of the universe was first suggested by the general theory of relativity and is supported by the calculations of astrophysics. The regular movement of the galactic light towards the red section of the spectrum is explained by the distancing of one galaxy from another. Thus, the size of the universe appears to be progressively increasing.

Conquest of Space

Among the achievements of modern science is the “conquest” of space which has resulted in mans journey to the moon. The prediction of this event surely springs to mind when we read the chapter ar-Rahmaan in the Qur’an:

“O assembly of Jinns and men, if you can penetrate the regions of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate them! You will not penetrate them except with authority.”

Qur’an, 55:33

Authority to travel in space can only come from the Creator of the laws which govern movement and space. The whole of this Qur’anic chapter invites humankind to recognize God’s beneficence.

GEOLOGY

Let us now return to earth to discover some of the many amazing statements contained in Qur’anic reflections about our own planet. They deal, not only with the physical phenomena observed here on earth, but also with details concerning the living organisms that inhabit it .

As in the case of everything we have discussed so far, we shall see that the Qur'an also expresses concepts in the field of geology that were way ahead of those current at the time of its revelation.

At this point, we must ask ourselves the following question: How could an uneducated man in the middle of the desert accurately tackle so many and such varied subjects at a time when mythology and superstition reigned supreme? How could he so skillfully avoid every belief that was proven to be totally inaccurate many centuries later?

Water Cycle

The verses dealing with the earthly systems are a case in point. I have quoted a large number of them in my book, *The Bible, The Qur'an and Science*, and have paid special attention to those that deal with the water cycle in nature. This is a topic which is well known today. Consequently, 28 the verses in the Qur'an that refer to the water cycle seem to express ideas that are now totally self-evident. But if we consider the ideas prevalent at that time, they appear to be based more on myth and philosophical speculation than on observed fact, even though useful practical knowledge on soil irrigation was current at that period.

Let us examine, for example, the following verse in chapter az-Zumar:

“Have you not seen that Allah sent rain down from the sky and caused it to penetrate the ground and come forth as springs, then He caused crops of different colors to grow...” Qur'an,39:21

Such notions seem quite natural to us today, but we should not forget that, not so long ago, they were not prevalent. It was not until the sixteenth century, with Bernard Palissy, that we gained the first coherent description of the water cycle. Prior to this, people believed that the waters of the oceans, under the effect of winds, were thrust towards the interior of the continents. They then returned to the oceans via the great abyss, which, since Plato's time was called the Tartarus. In the seventeenth century, great thinkers such as Descartes still believed in this myth. Even in the nineteenth century there were still those who believed in Aristotle's theory that water was condensed in cool mountain caverns and formed underground lakes that fed springs. Today, we know that it is the infiltration of rain water into the ground that is responsible for this. If one compares the facts of modern hydrology with the data found in numerous verses of the Qur'an on this subject, one cannot fail to notice the remarkable degree of agreement between the two.

Mountains

In geology, modern science has recently discovered the phenomenon of folding which formed the mountain ranges. The earth's crust is like a solid shell, while the deeper layers are hot and fluid, and thus inhospitable to any form of life. It has also been discovered that the stability of mountains is linked to the phenomenon of folding. The process of mountain formation by folding drove the earth's crust down into the lower layers and provided foundations for the mountains.

Let us now compare modern ideas with one verse among many in the Qur'an that deals with this subject. It is taken from chapter an-Naba':

“Have We not made the earth an expanse and the mountains stakes?”

Qur'an, 78:6-7

26 Stakes (awtaad), which are driven into the ground like those used to anchor a tent, are the deep foundations of geological folds.

Here, as in the case of all the other topics presented, the objective observer cannot fail to notice the absence of any contradiction to modern knowledge.

BIOLOGY More than anything else, I was struck by statements in the Qur'an dealing with living things, both in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, especially with regard to reproduction. We should really devote much more time to this subject, but, due to the limited scope of this presentation, I can only give a few examples.

I must once again stress the fact that it is only in modern times that scientific progress has made the hidden meaning of some Qur'anic verses comprehensible to us. Numerous translations and commentaries on the Qur'an have been made by learned men who had no access to modern scientific knowledge. It is for this reason that scientists find some of their interpretations unacceptable.

There are also other verses whose obvious meanings are easily understood, but which conceal

scientific meanings which are startling, to say the least. This is the case of a verse in chapter al-Ambiyaa, a part of which has already been quoted:

“Do the unbelievers not realize that the heavens and the earth were joined together,

then I clove them asunder and I made every living thing out of water. Will they still not believe?” Qur'an, 21:30

This is a dramatic affirmation of the modern idea that the origin of life is aquatic.

Botany

Progress in botany at the time of Muhammad (S) was not advanced enough in any country for scientists to know that plants have both male and female parts. Nevertheless, we may read the following in the chapter Taa Haa:

“(God is the One who) sent down rain from the sky and with it brought forth a variety of plants in pairs.” Qur'an, 20:53

Today we know that fruit comes from plants that have sexual characteristics even when they come from unfertilized flowers, like bananas. In the chapter ar-Ra'd we read the following:

“... and of all fruits (God) placed (on the earth) two pairs.” Qur'an, 13:3

Physiology

In the field of physiology, there is one verse which appears extremely significant to me. One thousand years before the discovery of the blood circulatory system, and roughly thirteen centuries before it was determined that the internal organs were nourished by the process of digestive, a verse in the Qur'an described the source of the constituents of milk, in conformity with scientific facts.

To understand this verse, it must first be known that chemical reactions occur between food and enzymes in the mouth, the stomach and the intestines releasing nutrients in molecular form which are then absorbed into the circulatory system through countless microscopic projections of the intestinal wall called villi. Blood in the circulatory system then transports the nutrients to all the organs of the body, among which are the milk-producing mammary glands.

This biological process must be basically understood, if we are to understand a verse in the Qur'an which has for many centuries given rise to commentaries that were totally incomprehensible.

Today it is not difficult to see why! This verse is taken from the chapter an-Nahl:

“Verily, in cattle there is a lesson for you. I give you drink from their insides, coming from a conjunction between the digested contents (of the intestines) and the blood, milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it.” Qur'an, 16:66

The constituents of milk are secreted by the mammary glands which are nourished by the product of food digestion brought to them by the bloodstream. The initial event which sets the whole process in motion is the conjunction of the contents of the intestine and blood at the level of the intestinal wall itself.

This very precise concept is the result of the discoveries made in the chemistry and physiology of the digestive system over one thousand years after the time of Prophet Muhammad (S).

EMBRYOLOGY

There are a multitude of statements in the Qur'an on the subject of human reproduction which constitute a challenge to the embryologist seeking a human explanation for them. It was only after the birth of the basic sciences which contributed to our knowledge of biology and the invention of the microscope, that humans were able to understand the depth of those Qur'anic statements. It was impossible for a human being living in the early seventh century to have accurately expressed such ideas. There is nothing to indicate that people in the Middle-East and Arabia knew anything more about this subject than people living in Europe or anywhere else. Today, there are many Muslims, possessing a thorough knowledge of the Qur'an and natural sciences, who have recognized the amazing similarity between the verses of the Qur'an dealing with reproduction and modern scientific knowledge.

I shall always remember the comment of an eighteen-year-old Muslim, brought up in Saudi Arabia, commenting on a reference to human reproduction as described in the Qur'an. He pointed to the Qur'an and said, “This book provides us with all the essential information on the subject. When I was at school, my teachers used the Qur'an to explain how children were born. Your books on sex-education are a bit late on the scene!”

If I were to spend as long on all the details of reproduction contained in the Qur'an, as the subject merits, this pamphlet would become a book. The detailed linguistic and scientific explanations I have given in *The Bible, The Qur'an and Science* are sufficient for the person who does not speak Arabic nor know much about embryology to be able to understand the meaning of such verses in the light of modern science in more depth.

It is especially in the field of embryology that a comparison between the beliefs present at the time of the Qur'an's revelation and modern scientific data, leaves us amazed at the degree of agreement between the Qur'an's statements and modern scientific knowledge. Not to mention the total absence of any reference in the Qur'an to the mistaken ideas that were prevalent around the world at the time.

Let us now isolate, from all these verses, precise ideas concerning the complexity of the semen and the fact that an infinitely small quantity is required to ensure fertilization. In chapter al-Insaan the Qur'an states:

“Verily, I created humankind from a small quantity of mingled fluids.” Qur'an, 76:2

The Arabic word *nutfah* has been translated as “small quantity”. It comes from the verb meaning ‘to dribble, to trickle’ and is used to describe what remains in the bottom of a bucket which has been emptied. The verse correctly implies that fertilization is performed by only a very small volume of liquid.

On the other hand, mingled fluids (*amshaaj*) has been understood by early commentators to refer to the mixture of male and female discharges. Modern authors have corrected this view and note that the sperm is made up of various components.

When the Qur'an talks of a fertilizing fluid composed of different components, it also informs us that human progeny will be formed from something extracted from this liquid. This is the meaning of the following verse in chapter as-Sajdah:

“Then He made [man's] offspring from the essence of a despised fluid.”
Qur'an, 32:8

The Arabic word translated by the term ‘essence’ is *sulaalah* which means ‘something extracted, the best part of a thing’. In whatever way it is translated, it refers to part of a whole. Under normal conditions, only one single cell, spermatozoon, out of over 50 million ejaculated by a man during sexual intercourse will actually penetrate the ovule.

Implantation

Once the egg has been fertilized in the fallopian tube, it descends to lodge itself inside the uterus. This process is called the ‘implantation of the egg’. Implantation is a result of the development of villousities, which, like roots in the soil, draw nourishment from the wall of the uterus and make the egg literally cling to the womb. The process of implantation is appropriately described in several verses by the word ‘*alaq*, which is also the title of the chapter in which one of the verses appears:

“God fashioned humans from a clinging entity.” Qur'an, 96:2

I do not think there is any reasonable translation of the word ‘*alaq* other than to use it in its original sense. It is a mistake to speak of a ‘blood clot’ here, which is the term Professor Hamidullah uses in his translation. It is a derivative meaning which is not as appropriate in this context.

Embryo

The evolution of the embryo inside the maternal uterus is only briefly described, but the description is accurate, because the simple words referring to it correspond exactly to fundamental stages in its growth. This is what we read in a verse from the chapter al-Mu'minoon:

“I fashioned the clinging entity into a chewed lump of flesh and I fashioned the chewed flesh into bones and I clothed the bones with intact flesh.” Qur’an, 23:14

The term ‘chewed flesh’ (mudghah) corresponds exactly to the appearance of the embryo at a certain stage in its development.

It is known that the bones develop inside this mass and that they are then covered with muscle. This is the meaning of the term ‘intact flesh’ (lahm).

The embryo passes through a stage where some parts are in proportion and others out of proportion with what is later to become the individual. This is the obvious meaning of a verse in the chapter al-Hajj, which reads as follows:

“I fashioned (humans) a clinging entity, then into a lump of flesh in proportion and out of proportion.” Qur’an, 22:5.

Next, we have a reference to the appearance of the senses and internal organs in the chapter as-Sajdah:

“... and (God) gave you ears, eyes and hearts.” Qur’an, 32:9

Nothing here contradicts today’s data and, furthermore, none of the mistaken ideas of the time have crept into the Qur’an. Throughout the Middle Ages there were a variety of beliefs about human development based on myths and speculations which continued for several centuries after the period. The most fundamental stage in the history of embryology came in 1651 with Harvey’s statement that “all life initially comes from an egg”. At that time, when science had benefited greatly from the invention of the microscope, people were still arguing about the respective roles of the egg and spermatozoon. Buffon, the great naturalist, was one of those in favor of the egg theory. Bonnet, on the other hand, supported the theory of ‘the ovaries of Eve’, which stated that Eve, the mother of the human race, was supposed to have had inside her the seeds of all human beings packed together one inside the other.

BIBLE, QUR’AN AND SCIENCE

We have now come to the last subject I would like to present in this short pamphlet: it is the

comparison between modern knowledge and passages in the Qur’an that are also referred to in the Bible.

Creation

We have already come across some of the contradictions between scripture and science regarding the creation of the universe. When dealing with that topic, I stressed the perfect agreement between modern knowledge and verses in the Qur’an, and pointed out that the Biblical narration contained statements that were scientifically unacceptable. This is hardly surprising if we are aware that the narration of the creation contained in the Bible was the work of priests living in the sixth century BC, hence the term ‘sacerdotal’ (priestly) narration is officially used to refer to it. The narration seems to have been conceived as the theme of a sermon designed to exhort people to observe the Sabbath. The narration was constructed with a definite end in view, and as Father de Vaux (a former head of the Biblical School of Jerusalem) has noted, this end was essentially legalist in character.

The Bible also contains a much shorter and older narration of Creation, the so-called 'Yahvist' version, which approaches the subject from a completely different angle. They are both taken from Genesis, the first book of the Pentateuch or Torah. Moses is supposed to have been its author, but the text we have today has undergone many changes.

The sacerdotal narration of Genesis is famous for its whimsical genealogies, that go back to Adam, and which nobody takes very seriously. Nevertheless, such Gospel authors as Matthew and Luke have reproduced them, more or less word-for-word, in their genealogies of Jesus. Matthew goes back as far as Abraham, and Luke to Adam. These writings are scientifically unacceptable, because they set a date for the age of the world and the time humans appeared on Earth, which most definitely contradicts what modern science has firmly established. The Qur'an, on the other hand, is completely free of dates of this kind.

Earlier on, we noted how perfectly the Qur'an agrees with modern ideas on the formation of the Universe. On the other hand, the Biblical narration of primordial waters is hardly, nor is the creation of light on the first day before the creation of the stars which produce this light; the existence of an evening and a morning before the creation of the earth; the creation of the earth on the third day before that of the sun on the fourth; the appearance of beasts of the earth on the sixth day after the appearance of the birds of the air on the fifth day, although the former came first. All these statements are the result of beliefs prevalent at the time this text was written and do not have any other meaning.

Age of the Earth As for the Biblical genealogies which form the basis of the Jewish calendar and assert that today the world is 5738 years old, these are hardly admissible either. Our solar system may well be four and a quarter billion years old, and the appearance of human beings on earth, as we know him today, may be estimated in tens of thousands of years, if not more. It is absolutely essential, therefore, to note that the Qur'an does not contain any such indications as to the age of the world, and that these are specific to the Biblical text.

The Flood

There is a second highly significant subject of comparison between the Bible and the Qur'an; descriptions of the deluge. In actual fact, the Biblical narration is a fusion of two descriptions in which events are related differently. The Bible speaks of a universal flood and places it roughly 300 years before Abraham.

According to what we know of Abraham, this would imply a universal cataclysm around the twenty-first or twenty-second century BC. This story would be untenable, in view of presently available historical data. How can we accept the idea that, in the twenty-first or twenty-second century BC, all civilization was wiped off the face of the earth by a universal cataclysm, when we know that this period corresponds, for example, to the one preceding the Middle Kingdom in Egypt, at roughly the date of the first Intermediary period before the eleventh dynasty? It is historically unacceptable to maintain that, at this time, humanity was totally wiped out. None of the preceding statements is acceptable according to modern knowledge. From this point of view, we can measure the enormous gap separating the Bible from the Qur'an.

In contrast to the Bible, the narration contained in the Qur'an deals with a cataclysm that is limited to Noah's people. They were punished for their sins, as were other ungodly peoples. The Qur'an does not fix the cataclysm in time. There are absolutely no historical or archaeological objections to the narration in the Qur'an.

The Pharaoh

A third point of comparison, which is extremely significant, is the story of Moses, and especially the Exodus from Egypt of the Hebrews. Here I can only give a highly compressed account of a study on this subject that appears in my book. I have noted the points where the Biblical and Qur'anic narrations agree and disagree, and I have found points where the two texts complement each other in a very useful way.

Among the many hypotheses, concerning the historical time-frame occupied by the Exodus in the history of the pharaohs, I have concluded that the most likely is the theory which makes Merneptah, Ramesses II's successor, the pharaoh of the Exodus. The comparison of the data contained in the Scriptures with archeological evidence strongly supports this hypothesis. I am pleased to be able to say that the Biblical narration contributes weighty evidence leading us to situate Moses in the history of the pharaohs. Moses was probably born during the reign of Ramesses II. Biblical data, are therefore of considerable historical value in the story of Moses. A medical study of the mummy of Merneptah has yielded further useful information on the p35 possible causes of this pharaoh's death. The fact that we possess the mummy of this pharaoh is one of paramount importance. The Bible records that pharaoh was engulfed in the sea, but does not give any details as to what subsequently became of his corpse. The Qur'an, in chapter Yoonus, notes that the body of the pharaoh would be saved from the waters:

"Today I will save your dead body so that you may be a sign for those who come after you." Qur'an, 10:92

A medical examination of this mummy, has, shown that the body could not have stayed in the water for long, because it does not show signs of deterioration due to prolonged submersion. Here again, the comparison between the narration in the Qur'an and the data provided by modern knowledge does not give rise to the slightest objection from a scientific point of view.

Such points of agreement are characteristic of the Qur'anic revelation. But, are we throwing the Judeo-Christian revelation into discredit and depriving it of all its intrinsic value by stressing the faults as seen from a scientific point of view? I think not because the criticism is not aimed at the text as a whole, but only at certain passages. There are parts of the Bible which have an undoubted historical value. I have shown that in my book, *The Bible, The Qur'an and Science*, where I discuss passages which enable us to locate Moses in time.

The main causes which brought about such differences as arise from the comparison between the Holy Scriptures and modern knowledge is known to modern scholars. The Old Testament constitutes a collection of literary works produced in the course of roughly nine centuries and which has undergone many alterations. The part played by men in the actual composition of the texts of the Bible is quite considerable.

The Qur'anic revelation, on the other hand, has a history which is radically different. As we have already seen, from the moment it was first commto humans, it was learnt by heart and written down during Muhammad's own lifetime. It is thanks to this fact that the Qur'an does not pose any problem of authenticity.

A totally objective examination of the Qur'an, in the light of modern knowledge, leads us to recognize the agreement between the two, as has already been noted on repeated occasions throughout this presentation.

It makes us deem it quite unthinkable for a man of Muhammad's time to have been the author of such statements, on account of the state of knowledge in his day. Such considerations are part of what gives the

Qur'anic revelation its unique place among religious and non-religious texts, and forces the impartial scientist to admit his inability to provide an explanation based solely upon materialistic reasoning. Such facts as I have had the pleasure of exposing to you here, appear to represent a genuine challenge to human explanation leaving only one alternative: the Qur'an is undoubtedly a revelation from God.

killing innocent human is a major sin in Islam & Islam is against terrorism. prophet Muhammad said no one has the right to burn anything only god has the right to burn someone which is in hell. love peace for all. may god bless & save us all. The basic belief of Islam: There is no god but Allah. Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus & Mohammad were all messengers of one creator god Allah. Allah is incomparable With no beginning & end. so Allah is forever. he is 1 with no partner & no image & no gender.

What non Muslim scholars say about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

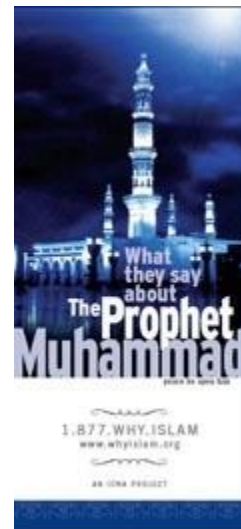
During the centuries of the crusades, all sorts of slanders were invented against the Prophet Muhammad (p)². However, with the birth of the modern age, marked with religious tolerance and freedom of thought, there has been a great change in the approach of Western authors in their delineation of his life and character.

The West, however, has yet to go a step forward to

discover the greatest reality about Muhammad (p); that is his being the true and the last Prophet of God for all humanity.

Despite all its objectivity and enlightenment, there has been no sincere and objective attempt by the West to understand the Prophethood of Muhammad (p). It is so strange that very glowing tributes are paid to him for his integrity and achievement but his claim of being the Prophet of God is rejected explicitly or implicitly. It is here that a searching of the heart is required, and a review of the so-called objectivity is needed. The following glaring facts from the life of Muhammad (p) have been furnished to facilitate an unbiased, logical and objective decision regarding his Prophethood.

Up to the age of forty, Muhammad (p) was not known as a statesman, a preacher or an orator. He was never seen discussing the principles of metaphysics, ethics, law, politics, economics or sociology. No doubt he possessed an excellent character and charming manners and was known to be highly cultured. Yet there was nothing so deeply striking and so radically extraordinary in him that would make men expect something great and revolutionary from him in the future. But when he came out of the Cave of Hira, with a new message, he was completely transformed. Is it possible for a person known to possess an upright and unblemished character, to suddenly turn an impostor. and claim to be the



33 Prophet of God?. It is well known that his claim invited the rage of his people, and marked the beginning of a long, arduous struggle. One might ask: .for what reason did he suffer all those hardships?His people offered to accept him as their King and to lay all the riches of the land at his feet if only he would leave the preaching of his message. But he turned down their alluring offers and continued to preach in the face of insults, social boycott and even physical assault. Furthermore, had he come with a design of rivalry with the Christians and the Jews, why should he have believed in Jesus Christ and Moses and other Prophets of God (peace be upon them), which is a basic requirement of faith without which no one could be a Muslim?

It is well known that Muhammad (p) was unlettered and had led a very uneventful life before he announced his mission to the world at the age of forty. Is it not an incontrovertible proof of his Prophethood, that despite being unlettered, all of Arabia stood in awe and wonder when he began preaching his message, and was bewitched by the wonderful eloquence of his message? The whole legion of Arab poets, preachers and orators of the highest caliber failed to bring forth the equivalent of the Qur.an, which remains inimitable to this day. And above all, how could he then pronounce truths of scientific nature contained in the Qur.an that no human being could possibly have discovered at that time

Last, but not the least, why did he lead a hard life even after gaining power and authority? The words he uttered while dying were: .We the community of the Prophets are not inherited. Whatever we leave is for charity. As a matter of fact, Muhammad (p), is the last link of Prophets sent in different lands and times since the beginning of the human life on earth.

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls... His forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an impostor but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold, the unity of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with the words.

Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man

34 greater than he?[Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*, Paris 1854 Vol. II, pp. 276-77.]

It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder; the same pure and perfect impression that he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran... The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God., is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honors of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion.[Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley, *History of the Saracen Empire*, London 1870, p. 54.]

He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Popes pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports.[Bosworth Smifu, *Mohammad and Mohammadanism*. London 1874, p. 92.]

.It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher.[Annie Besant, *The Life and Teachings of Muhammad*, Madras 1932, p.4]

His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.[W. Montgomery, *Mohammad at Mecca*, Oxford, 1953, p. 52.]

Muhammad, the inspired man who founded Islam, was born about A.D. 570 into an Arabian tribe that worshipped idols. Orphaned at birth, he was always particularly solicitous of the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan, the slave and the downtrodden. At twenty he was already a successful businessman, and soon became director of camel caravans for a wealthy widow. When he reached twenty-five his employer, recognizing his merit, proposed marriage. Even though she was fifteen years older, he married her, and as long as she lived remained a devoted husband.

Like almost every major prophet before him, Muhammad fought shy of serving as the transmitter of God's word, sensing his own inadequacy. But the angel commanded Read.. So far as we know, Muhammad was unable to read or write, but he began to dictate those inspired words which would soon revolutionize a large segment of the earth; .There is one God.

In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred, and rumors of God's personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced, An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human being..

At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: If there are any among you who worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives forever..

[James A. Michener, Islam The Misunderstood Religion., In the Reader's Digest (American Edition) for May 1955, pp. 68-70.]

[Source : WAMY3 Series on Islam]

1. The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History, New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1978, p. 33.

2. (p) here stands for .peace be upon him3. World Assembly of Muslim Youth

Was prophet Jesus punished for other peoples sins:No,it was his enemy whose look was turned into the look & face of jesus.jesus was taken alive to heaven by God.jesus will come back and will die on this earth as a human & messenger of allah.from Adam to Moses to Jesus to Mohammad god sent all of them as messengers & they were all muslims.God is the most just .He never does unjust.Every one will be punished for their own sins.God will never punish Jesus or anyone for the sins of others because that's unjust & common sence.God is the most merciful he will forgive whoever he wishes to. But the sinner will have to ask for forgiveness ,beg for it & promise god to not to repeat it again & god will forgive. Pray to god:god you love forgiveness,you are the forgiver I'm a sinner so please forgive me. people judge people .Allah judges you by your heart.

(Surah Al-Fatiha (The Opening) al Quran)In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,The Beneficent, the Merciful.Owner of the Day of Judgment,Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help.Guide us on the

The path of those whom Thou hast favored; Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.

(1 : 1-7)

What does Islam say about Terrorism?

One of the distinctive characteristics of the times we live in is the overwhelming presence of violence in our societies.

Whether it is a bomb going off in a market place, or the hijacking of an aircraft where innocent people are held at ransom to achieve political ends, we live in an age, where the manipulation and loss of innocent lives has become commonplace.

Such is the all-pervasive nature of indiscriminate violence, that "terrorism" is considered as one of the prime threats to peace and security in our societies.

The word terrorism came into wide usage only a few decades ago. One of the unfortunate results of this new terminology is that it limits the definition of terrorism to that perpetrated by small groups or individuals. Terrorism, in fact, spans the entire world, and manifests itself in various forms. Its perpetrators do not fit any stereotype. Those who hold human lives cheap, and have the power to expend human lives, appear at different levels in our societies. The frustrated employee who kills his colleagues in cold-blood or the oppressed citizen of an occupied land who vents his anger by blowing up a school bus are terrorists who provoke our anger and revulsion. Ironically however, the politician who uses age-old ethnic animosities between peoples to consolidate his position, the head of state who orders "carpet bombing" of entire cities, the exalted councils that choke millions of civilians to death by wielding the insidious weapon of sanctions, are rarely punished for their crimes against humanity.

It is this narrow definition of terrorism that implicates only individuals and groups, that has caused Muslims to be associated with acts of destruction and terror in the popular media. Often, the religion of Islam is held responsible for the acts of a



Could it be possible that Islam, whose light ended the Dark Ages in Europe, now propound the advent of an age of terror? Could a faith that has over 1.2 billion followers the world over, and over 7 million in America, actually advocate the killing and maiming of innocent people? Could Islam, whose name itself stands for "peace" and "submission to God", encourage its adherents to work for death and destruction?

For too long, have we relied on stereotypical images in the news media and in Hollywood films, for answers to these pertinent questions. It is time now to look at the sources of Islam, and its history, to determine whether Islam does indeed advocate violence.

Sanctity of human life

The Glorious Qur'an says:

"...take not life, which God hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom." [Al-Qur'an 6:151]

Islam considers all life forms as sacred. However, the sanctity of human life is accorded a special place. The first and the foremost basic right of a human being is the right to live. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"...if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people." [Al-Qur'an 5:32]

Such is the value of a single human life, that the Qur'an equates the taking of even one human life unjustly, with killing all of humanity. Thus, the Qur'an prohibits homicide in clear terms. The taking of a criminal's life by the state in order to administer justice is required to uphold the rule of law, and the peace and security of the society. Only a proper and competent court can decide whether an individual has forfeited his right to life by disregarding the right to life and peace of other human beings.

Ethics of WAR

Even in a state of war, Islam enjoins that one deals with the enemy nobly on the battlefield. Islam has drawn a clear line of distinction between the combatants and the non-combatants of the enemy country. As far as the non-combatant population is concerned such as women, children, the old and the infirm, etc., the instructions of the Prophet are as follows: "Do not kill any old person, any child or any woman" [1].

"Do not kill the monks in monasteries" or "Do not kill the people who are sitting in places of worship." [2]

During a war, the Prophet saw the corpse of a woman lying on the ground and

"She was not fighting. How then she came to be killed?" Thus non-combatants are guaranteed security of life even if their state is at war with an Islamic state.

Jihad

JIHAD While Islam in general is misunderstood in the western world, perhaps no other Islamic term evokes such strong reactions as the word 'jihad'. The term 'jihad' has been much abused, to conjure up bizarre images of violent Muslims, forcing people to submit at the point of the sword. This myth was perpetuated throughout the centuries of mistrust during and after the Crusades. Unfortunately, it survives to this day.

The word Jihad comes from the root word jahada, which means to struggle. So jihad is literally an act of struggling, and this struggle can have various forms. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) referred to the struggle against the insidious suggestions of one's own soul as a form of jihad. Thus the inner struggle of being a person of virtue and submission to God in all aspects of life, is part of the essence of Islam.

Jihad also refers to struggle against injustice. Islam, like many other religions, allows for armed self-defense, or retribution against tyranny, exploitation, and oppression. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"And why should ye not fight in the cause of God and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)? - Men, women, and children, whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from thee one who will protect; and raise for us from thee one who will help!" [Al-Qur'an 4:75]

Thus Islam enjoins upon its believers to strive utmost, in purifying themselves, as well as in establishing peace and justice in the society. A Muslim can never be at rest while there is injustice and oppression around her. Martin Luther King Jr., quite aptly said:

"We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people."

Islam enjoins upon all Muslims to work actively to maintain the balance in which God created everything. However, regardless of how legitimate the cause may be, the Glorious Qur'an categorically denounces the killing of innocent people. Terrorizing the civilian population, whether by small groups or by states, can never be termed as jihad and can never be reconciled with the teachings of Islam.

History of Tolerance

Even Western scholars have repudiated the myth of Muslims coercing others to convert. The great historian De Lacy O'Leary wrote:

"History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims, sweeping

through the world and forcing Islam at the point of sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.” [3]

Muslims ruled Spain for roughly 800 years. During this time, and up until they were finally forced out, the non-Muslims there were alive and flourishing. Additionally, Christian and Jewish minorities have survived in the Muslim lands of the Middle East for centuries. Countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan all have significant Christian and/or Jewish populations. This is not surprising to a Muslim, for his faith prohibits him from forcing others to see his point of view. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And God heareth and knoweth all things." [Al-Qur'an 2:256]

Islam- The Great Unifier

Far from being a militant dogma, Islam is a way of life that transcends race and ethnicity. The Glorious Qur'an repeatedly reminds us of our common origin:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)." [Al-Qur'an 49:13]

Thus, it is the universality of its teachings that makes Islam the fastest growing religion in the world. In a world full of conflicts and deep schisms between human beings, a world that is threatened with terrorism, perpetrated by individuals and states, Islam is a beacon of light that offers hope for the future.

- 1 Narrated in the collection of traditions of Abu Dawud,
2. Narrated in the Musnad of Imam Ibn Hanbal,
3. Islam At Crossroads, London, 1923, pg. 8

Also visit <http://www.islamtomorrow.com/women/rights.asp>

womens rights in islam check that website out its awesome

www.whyislam.org

Women in Islam

877-WHY-ISLAM Brochure

Oppressed, inferior, and unequal – for many people, these are the first words that come to mind when thinking about women in Islam. These stereotypes confuse Islam with cultural practices and fail to

recognize that Islam has empowered women with the most progressive rights since the 7th century. In Islam, women are not inferior or unequal to men. This brochure presents the actual teachings of Islam regarding the rights, roles, and responsibilities of women, with a special focus on gender equality in Islam.

At a time when female children were buried alive in Arabia and women were considered transferable property, Islam honored women in society by elevating them and protecting them with unprecedented rights. Islam gave women the right to education, to marry someone of their choice, to retain their identity after marriage, to divorce, to work, to own and sell property, to seek protection by the law, to vote, and to participate in civic and political engagement.

In 610 C.E., God began to reveal the message of Islam to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (pbuh), in Mecca. Muhammad (pbuh) called people towards the belief in one God and encouraged them to be just and merciful to one another. In reforming the pagan Arab society, he particularly transformed their mindset regarding the treatment of women. Islam abolished the practice of killing female children and raised the stature of women in society to one of dignity, esteem, and privilege.

God devotes an entire chapter of the Quran, the holy book of Islam, to women. In addition, God directly addresses women repeatedly throughout the Quran. Islam proclaims that all human beings, men and women, are born in a pure state. The goal of every Muslim is to preserve this purity by shunning evil tendencies and beautifying their inner being with virtuous traits.

Islam further confirms that both men and women are equal in the sight of God. In the Quran, God declares, “...*Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...*” (49:13) At another place in the Quran, God clearly states that all humans are equal: “*To whoever, male or female, does good deeds and has faith, We shall give a good life and reward them according to the best of their actions.*” (16:97)

While Islam clearly establishes that men and women are equal, it does recognize that they are not identical. God created men and women with unique physiological and psychological attributes. In Islam, these differences are embraced as vital components to a healthy family and community structure with each individual contributing their own distinctive talents to society.

Hence, God’s rules apply to both genders, but in diverse ways. For example, God commanded women to cover certain parts of their body, including their hair, to preserve their modesty. Men are also required to cover parts of their body out of modesty, but not in the same way as women. Therefore, God commanded both men and women to be modest; yet, the manner in which they observe it is different.

Similarly, the rights, roles, and responsibilities of women are evenly balanced with those of men but are not necessarily the same. As Islam has granted individual identities to men and women, a constant comparison between the two is futile. Each plays a unique role to mutually uphold social morality and societal balance.

The following overview details a wide range of women’s rights in Islam. It addresses some common misconceptions and provides insight into the diverse roles and responsibilities women fulfill in society. It must also be mentioned here that Muslims are not always representative of Islam and may follow their cultural influences or personal interests. In so doing, they not only disenfranchise women, they also go against the clear guidelines laid out in Islam regarding the treatment of women. Therefore, their practices go against the liberties and entitlements which Islam empowers women with, as shown below.

Education

Back in the 7th century, Muhammad (pbuh) declared that the pursuit of knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim – male and female. This declaration was very clear and was largely implemented by Muslims throughout history. One of the most influential scholars of Islam was Muhammad's wife, Aisha. After his death, men and women would travel to learn from her because she was considered a great scholar of Islam. The recognition of female scholarship and women's participation in academia has been encouraged and practiced throughout the majority of Islamic history. For instance, al-Qarawiyyin Mosque and University, the oldest running university, was funded by a woman, Fatima al-Fihri, in Morocco in 859 C.E.

Motherhood

In Islam, God clearly gives mothers a high status and elevates their position in the family. In the Quran, God mentions all the sacrifices mothers make in bearing children to remind people to treat their mothers with love, respect, and care. Emphasizing the importance of mothers, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Heaven lies under the feet of your mother."

On another occasion, a man repeatedly asked Muhammad (pbuh), "Who amongst the people is the most worthy of my good companionship?" Each time, the Prophet (pbuh) replied, "Your mother." When the man asked for the fourth time, he replied, "Your father."

Politics and Social Services

Among the early Muslims, women were active participants in the cohesive functioning of the society. Women expressed their opinions freely and their advice was actively sought. Women nursed the wounded during battles, and some even participated on the battlefield. Women traded openly in the marketplace, so much so that the second caliph, Umar, appointed a woman, Shaffa bint Abdullah, as the supervisor of the bazaar.

In Islamic history, women participated in government, public affairs, lawmaking, scholarship, and teaching. To continue to uphold this tradition, women are encouraged to actively participate in improving, serving, and leading the different aspects of the community.

Inheritance

Before Islam, women all across the globe were deprived of inheritance and were themselves considered property to be inherited by men. Islam gave women the right to own property and inherit from relatives, which was a revolutionary concept in the seventh century.

Whether a woman is a wife, mother, sister, or daughter, she receives a certain share of her deceased relative's property. This share depends on her degree of relationship to the deceased and the number of heirs. While many societies around the world denied women inheritance, Islam assured women this right, illustrating the universal justice of Islam's divine law.

Financial Responsibilities

In Islam, women are not obligated to earn or spend any money on housing, food, or general expenses. If a woman is married, her husband must fully support her financially and if she's not married, that responsibility belongs to her closest male relative (father, brother, uncle, etc).

She also has the right to work and spend the money she earns as she wishes. She has no obligation to share her money with her husband or any other family members, although she may choose to do so out of good will. For instance, Khadija, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was one of the most successful businesswomen of Mecca, and she freely spent from her wealth to support her husband and the cause of Islam.

At the time of marriage, a woman is entitled to a financial gift (dowry) from her husband.

This dowry is legally owned by her and cannot be used by anyone else. In the case of divorce, she has the right to keep whatever she owned before the divorce and anything she personally earned after marriage. The former husband has no right whatsoever to any of her belongings. This ensures a woman's financial security and independence, allowing her to support herself in the case of divorce.

Marriage

A woman has the right to accept or reject marriage proposals and her approval is required to complete the marriage contract. She cannot be forced to marry someone against her will and if this occurs for cultural reasons, it is in direct opposition of Islam. By the same principle, women also have the right to seek divorce if they are dissatisfied with their marriage.

In Islam, marriage is based on mutual peace, love, and compassion. God says about Himself, *"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy..."* (Quran 30:21) Muhammad (pbuh) embodied the best character and is a role model for all Muslims. His example of being helpful around the household and treating his family with compassion and love is a tradition that Muslims strive to implement in their daily lives. Muhammad (pbuh) treated his wives with the utmost respect and honor and was never abusive towards them. One of his traditions clearly states, "The best of you are those who are best to their wives."

Dignity and Protection from Harm

Any form of emotional, physical, or psychological abuse is prohibited in Islam and the improper treatment of women is no exception to this rule. Indeed, there is no teaching in Islam, when studied in its complete context, which condones any kind of domestic violence. Islam clearly disallows any form of oppression or abuse, according to Dr. Zainab Alwani, a leading female Muslim scholar. It cannot be stated enough times that anyone who exercises unjust authority in the name of Islam is actually doing so to uphold their own cultural influences or personal interests. All of God's creation is dignified and protected under Islamic law.

Modesty

In an environment which constantly emphasizes the physical form through various media, women are constantly faced with an unattainable standard of beauty. Although Muslim women are falsely classified as oppressed based on their modest dress, they are in fact liberated from such objectification by the society around them. This modest appearance, which includes veiling, highlights a woman's personality and character instead of her physical figure and promotes a deeper appreciation for who she is as a

43 person. In this regard, Muslim women identify with Mary, the mother of Jesus (pbuh), who is known for her piety and modesty.

In conclusion, Islam has an extensive tradition of protecting the civil liberties of women based on the guidelines set forth by God and His Prophet. Women are empowered with many rights and protections under Islamic law and are honored with a dignified stature in society.

Quran is not a copy of anything & there is no evidence to say such. Statements in Quran are against torah & bible. Torah & bible has so many errors. & according to science 80% of Quran matches with science & other 20% of Quran science doesn't have answers maybe it will take couple of hundred years to find out for science. According to historians original bible doesn't exist anymore. According to Islam torah & bible were books of Allah but humans have destroyed their originality. So Quran is the last & final word of god Allah & Muhammad is the last & final messenger of Allah. Quran is not copy of anything and its 100% word of god in Islam. According to science torah & bible's statements have errors & Quran's statements are accurate & word of god is accurate.

QUESTION: WHY WOMEN CAN'T HAVE 4 HUSBANDS?

Answer: If a man has 4 wives & they have a child there would be 1 father & that's the husband only. If a woman has 4 husbands & she gives birth it would be confusing to know who is father out of 4. But now with DNA test you can find out. And suddenly all 4 wives want to be a mom. They can go to 1 husband make love, wait couple of more months & finally give birth of their child. In the same time 4 husbands want to have their own baby with 1 wife & only she can give birth the husbands can't give birth & they don't want their baby in a test tube or other women to give birth except their own married wife. Now they will either kill each other to have 1 to make love with his wife or divorce her or leave her forever or even worst rape & kill her simply creating the most dangerous situation. A man is allowed to marry up to 4 only not 5 or 6. First the rule is to marry only 1 & then if he can do justice & treat all 4 100% equally and of course take her all responsibility meaning can effort her 100% only then he can marry up to 4. Prophet Muhammad said the best of man is the 1 who is the best to his wife. A man asked the prophet who should I do the most favor to 1st he replied your mother the man asked 2nd he replied your mother man asked 3rd he replied your mother, man asked for 4th time he replied your father. The mother has 3 times more right than the father. He also said the heaven is in beneath the foot of your mother. A wife's heaven is beneath the foot of her husband. In Quran it says men are like the clothes to their wives & wives are like the clothes to their husbands. It means they are both equal to Allah god even their physical shapes & purpose are different. & clothes were very important things in that time & still are. It's a grace a mercy & a blessing of god Allah that women can give birth and be a mother which man can never do or earn that right & respect & position of a woman in Islam. But in Christianity and Judaism giving birth and having the monthly period or menses was seen as a punishment & a curse from god. In the past they even dared to ask if a woman had a soul? Again the maximum wives a man can have are 4 not anymore. The bible has no restrictions on how many wives or husbands can a person have it's the

church's decision to have 1 husband & 1 wife. In Islam a woman can have only 1 husband. For more information search in Google by your own self & believe in the evidence from God the Holy Quran which provides peace & protection for humanity. May Allah guide & protect all. No hate only love peace & God bless for all.

1) www.answering-christianity.com

2) www.islamtomorrow.com 3) <http://www.irf.net/irf/comparativereligion/index.htm>

3) www.irfny.com 4) www.peacetv.tv 5) www.whyislam.org

Mistakes in the Torah proved by the discoveries of modern science

The Torah has many verses, which contradict modern scientific facts.

These contradictions indicate that the Torah is not the word of Allah

(S.W.) who is far from errors and ignorance of science facts that man discovered later. Allah (S.W.), the Omniscient, would not tell in his book except the truth. He has a complete perfect knowledge of every thing in the universe.

- The Torah mentions the story of the creation in Genesis, where it talks about the creation of the universe in six earthly days consisting of mornings and evenings.

According to the biblical order, on the first day, He created the earth, the light, the darkness, and the water. On the second day, He created the sky when He put a firmament between water and water, and on the third day, the water gathered under the firmament, the land appeared and the herbs and grass grew.

On the fourth day, He created the sun, the moon, and the stars that above the firmament (the sky), and on the fifth day, He created the marine animals and the birds. On the sixth day, He created Adam and the wild animals, and finished the creation on that day. (See Genesis 1: 1 - 31)

Scientists note that the order and the directing of the story of the beginning of the universe are rejected by modern science that Allah (S.W.) gave to humanity. If these books were from Allah (S.W.), they would not contain these continuous errors.

Genesis talks about six earthly days consisting of days and nights (***And there was evening and there was morning***), and the seventh day was the Sabbath, on which the Creator rested (God Almighty is far above that). It is well known scientifically that the creation of the universal happened during periods of millions of years. Allah (S.W.) is right when He mentions in the Holy Quran the difference between His days and human days. "***Verily, a Day in the***

(Holy Quran, Surah 22, Al-Hajj – 47)

Scientists say that the Earth's surface took millions of years to cool down and became suitable for living. Genesis says that the water appeared on earth on its first day, then the appearance of the plants on its third, and the animals on the fourth and the fifth days.

The biblical order of the appearance of the creations contradicts the findings of geologic history. The presence of water on the face of the earth on the first day contradicts the scientific theory that the earth and the universe were gas at the beginning of creation. In addition, the plants cannot appear before the existence of the sun, and the marine animals and birds were not before wild animals.

Scientifically, saying that the creation of the earth was before the creation of the sun and the stars (on the fourth day) is wrong.

Moreover, the appearance of the night and the day for three days, without the sun is surprising!

In addition, saying that the appearance of plants was three days before man is wrong. Scientific discoveries tell us that the presence of vegetations was millions of years before the presence of man. The majority of the objections about this story of creation are in father Devoux's criticism of Genesis.

- Among the scientific observations on the Torah, is that it speaks at length about the age of the founding fathers from Adam to Abraham.

It makes the birth of Abraham in the twentieth century from the beginning of human existence on earth, specifically in the year 1948 of the creation of the universe and the appearance of man on earth. There is no historical accurate information about the period between Abraham and Jesus, but historians estimated it to be eighteen centuries, depending on the biblical sources. Therefore, the appearance of Christ was thirty-eight centuries after the creation of Adam.

1 - The Torah, the Gospel, and the Quran and Science, Maurice Bocaille , pp 44 – 51, A study on the Torah

and the Gospel, Kamel Saafan, pp179, Readings in the Holy Bible, Abderrahim Mohamad, Vol.2, pp 182

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According to the Hebrew date, the year (2000) is equal to the year 5761 of the creation of the universe; therefore, the biblical information makes human life on earth no more than six thousand years.

This contradicts the scientific data, which consider the biblical Informations are full of errors or written by men not God.

Science has proved the existence of civilizations five thousand years before the birth of Jesus.

Archaeologists believe that there was a bloody war between the north and the south of Egypt in 4042 BCE, and won by the people of the Egyptian Delta. However, their victory was not decisive, as the Egyptian civilization recorded history started with the first family, which ruled Egypt between 3400 to 3200 BCE, and there is much that that had not been recorded.

Archaeologists also found human-made things that belong to more

than five thousand years BCE, and the mission of Cairo University found traces of humans in the Fayoum region belong to tens of thousands of earlier years.

Encyclopedia Britannica states that the human traces in Palestine belong to two hundred thousand years. Donald Jean said in 1979, *"The human presence on earth was four million years ago"*.

Allah (S.W.) is right when He affirms in the Holy Quran that humanity started long centuries ago. ***"(Pharaoh) said: 'What then is the condition of previous generations?' He replied: 'The knowledge of that is with my Lord, duly recorded: my Lord never errs, nor forgets.'"*** (Holy Quran, Surah 20, Ta Ha – 51 - 52) ***"As also 'Ad and Thamud, and the Companions of the Rass, and many a generation between them."*** (Holy Quran, Surah 25, Al Furqan – 38) ***"Has not the story reached you, (O people!), of those who (went) before you of the people of Noah, and 'Ad, and Thamud? - And of those who (came) after them? None knows them but Allah."*** (Holy Quran, Surah 14, Ibrahim – 38)

2 - The Torah, the Gospel, and the Quran and Science, Maurice Bocaille , pp 20, A study on the Torah and

the Gospel, Kamel Saafan, pp179

- In addition, there are many things the Torah mentions that are contrary to the scientifically well established facts. It mentions that the rabbit is one of the ruminant animals! It says, ***"Nevertheless these***

ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that

have the hoof cloven: the camel, and the hare, and the coney; because they chew the cud but part not the hoof, they are unclean unto you" (Deuteronomy 14: 7)

- It also mentions that the serpent was punished by eating or licking the soil, (See Genesis 3:14), as in the Book of Micah. ***"They shall lick the dust like a serpent; like crawling things of the earth"*** (Micah 7: 17) All types of snakes that scientifically classified eat insects and reptiles and others, they never eat or lick soil.

- Leviticus speaks of legendary birds that have four legs - some leap, and some walk -, which do not exist except in legendary fiction. It says, ***"All winged creeping things that go upon all fours are an abomination unto you. Yet these may ye eat of all winged creeping things that go upon all fours, which have legs above their feet, wherewith to leap upon the earth. Even these of them ye may eat... But all winged creeping things, which have four feet, are an abomination unto you."*** (Leviticus 11: 20-23) No archaeological reports or other information states that something like this was on the face of earth one day.

- Among the scientific errors also is what the Book of Genesis mentions (30: 37-43). It claims that Jacob's sheep produced, and the color of the production was different from the color of the parents. He prepared some rods of fresh poplar and almond and peeled white streaks on them. Seeing these peeled rods, the sheep craved, and brought forth ring streaked, speckled, and spotted sheep. If this was true, the sheep's production in spring would be green, but this

mistake is man made errors & is contrary to what scientists know about genes and genetic codes.so, it can't be word of the lord.

- The Book of Genesis mentions the strangest birth story, namely the story of Tamar, the adulterous, delivering the twins from Judas, her father-in-law and the father of her husbands. **"And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that one put out a hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, Wherefore hast thou made a breach for thyself? Therefore his name was called Perez. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zerah"** (Genesis 38: 27-30) The first-born put his hand out of his mother's womb, which is unusual during the birth process. However, the baby wanted to affirm his right of being the first-born child, and the midwife understood him, and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread.

Then a stranger thing, which medical theories cannot explain, happened. The first-born gave a space so his twin brother so he could come out into the world, and then he (whom his hand had a scarlet thread) followed him. This story cannot be accepted

scientifically, and append it to the stories of the elderly better than append it to Allah's (S.W.) word and revelation.

- The Book of Job gives a strange vision of the creation of the fetus. It is poured in a template as pouring milk, then clots in the middle of this template, as the clotting milk transformed into cheese. This has nothing to do whatsoever with what scientists know about the stages of the creation of the fetus.

Addressing Allah (S.W.), the Book of Job says, **"Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast fashioned me as clay; And wilt thou bring me into dust again? Hast thou not poured me out as milk, And curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, And knit me together with bones and sinews."** (Job 10: 9 -11)

- The Torah claims that the earth has pillars, has corners, and it is flat, approving the scientific mainstream during the time of the writing. It says, **"The sun also arises, and the sun goes down, and haste to its place where it arises."** (Ecclesiastes 1: 5) The writer did not know neither that the earth is spherical, nor that it spins on its axis to create the sunrise and sunset.

The author of that verse was not Allah (S.W.) the Omniscient, who says, **"He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): He makes the Night overlap the Day, and the Day overlap the Night: He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law)"** (Holy Quran, Surah 39, Az-Zumar – 5)

Describing Allah (S.W.), the Torah says that He is **"That shaketh the earth out of its place, And the pillars thereof tremble"**. (Job 9: 6) The holy books' writers confirmed this misconception. They claimed that Allah (S.W.) said to Job, **"Where were you when I**

48 *put the earth on its base? Say, if you have knowledge. By whom were its measures fixed? Say, if you have wisdom; or by whom was the line stretched out over it? On what were its pillars based, or who laid its corner-stone"* (Job 38: 4-6), and the Book of Samuel says. *"For the pillars of the earth are Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them."* (1Samuel 2: 8).

The New Testament confirms this naive and wrong perception of the earth; it is flat, with pillars, and with four corners, in some verses, which I will mention them in their place of this series.

Ecclesiastes speaks about the water cycle on earth and why the sea would not be full, although much water is poured into it from rivers. It mentions that the seawater goes back again to the springs of the rivers, so the sea would not be full. It says, *"All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea doth not overflow: unto the place from whence the rivers come, they return, to flow again "*. (Ecclesiastes 1: 7)

Finally, the Torah ratifies that humans have the ability of bringing the souls of the dead, and tells that this actually happened. The sorcerer was able to bring Prophet Samuel's spirit to King Saul, and explained the talk between them. (See 1Samuel 28: 3-20) This is close to witchcraft and myth more than anything else.

These errors and others testify that this book is not the word of Allah (S.W.), if it is from Allah (S.W.) it would not contain these errors, which today's young students know, let alone the scientists. The word of Allah (S.W.) does not err, nor teach people lies or error.

Surah 19 - Maryam MARY

019.001 Kaf, Ha, Ya, 'Ain, Sad. **019.002** (This is) a recital of the Mercy of thy Lord to His servant Zakariya. **019.003** Behold! he cried to his Lord in secret, **019.004** Praying: "O my Lord! infirm indeed are my bones, and the hair of my head doth glisten with grey: but never am I unblest, O my Lord, in my prayer to Thee! **019.005** "Now I fear (what) my relatives (and colleagues) (will do) after me: but my wife is barren: so give me an heir as from Thyself,-

019.006 "(One that) will (truly) represent me, and represent the posterity of Jacob; and make him, O my Lord! one with whom Thou art well-pleased!" **019.007** (His prayer was answered): "O Zakariya! We give thee good news of a son: His name shall be Yahya: on none by that name have We conferred distinction before." **019.008** He said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son, when my wife is barren and I have grown quite decrepit from old age?" **019.009** He said: "So (it will be) thy Lord saith, 'that is easy for Me: I did indeed create thee before, when thou hadst been nothing!'" **019.010** (Zakariya) said: "O my Lord! give me a Sign." "Thy Sign," was the answer, "Shall be that thou shalt speak to no man for three nights, although thou art not dumb." **019.011** So Zakariya came out to his people from his chamber: He told them by signs to celebrate God's praises in the

49 morning and in the evening. 019.012 (To his son came the command): "O Yahya! take hold of the Book with might": and We gave him Wisdom even as a youth, 019.013 And pity (for all creatures) as from Us, and purity: He was devout, 019.014 And kind to his parents, and he was not overbearing or rebellious. 019.015 So Peace on him the day he was born, the day that he dies, and the day that he will be raised up to life (again)! 019.016 Relate in the Book (the story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East. 019.017 She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects. 019.018 She said: "I seek refuge from thee to (God) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear God." 019.019 He said: "Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son. 019.020 She said: "How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?" 019.021 He said: "So (it will be): Thy Lord saith, 'that is easy for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us': It is a matter (so) decreed." 019.022 So she conceived him, and she retired with him to a remote place. 019.023 And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree: She cried (in her anguish): "Ah! would that I had died before this! would that I had been a thing forgotten and out of sight!" 019.024 But (a voice) cried to her from beneath the (palm-tree): "Grieve not! for thy Lord hath provided a rivulet beneath thee; 019.025 "And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree: It will let fall fresh ripe dates upon thee. 019.026 "So eat and drink and cool (thine) eye. And if thou dost see any man, say, 'I have vowed a fast to (God) Most Gracious, and this day will I enter into not talk with any human being'" 019.027 At length she brought the (babe) to her people, carrying him (in her arms). They said: "O Mary! truly an amazing thing hast thou brought! 019.028 "O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a man of evil, nor thy mother a woman unchaste!" 019.029 But she pointed to the babe. They said: "How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?" 019.030 He said: "I am indeed a servant of God: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; 019.031 "And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live; 019.032 "(He) hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable; 019.033 "So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)"! 019.034 Such (was) Jesus the son of Mary: (it is) a statement of truth, about which they (vainly) dispute. 019.035 It is not befitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! when He determines a matter, He only says to it, "Be", and it is. 019.036 Verily God is my Lord and your Lord: Him therefore serve ye: this is a Way that is straight. 019.037 But the sects differ among themselves: and woe to the unbelievers because of the (coming) Judgment of a Momentous Day! 019.038 How plainly will they see and hear, the Day that they will appear before Us! but the unjust today are in error manifest! 019.039 But warn them of the Day of Distress, when the matter will be determined: for (behold,) they are negligent and they do not believe! 019.040 It is We Who will inherit the earth, and all beings thereon: to Us

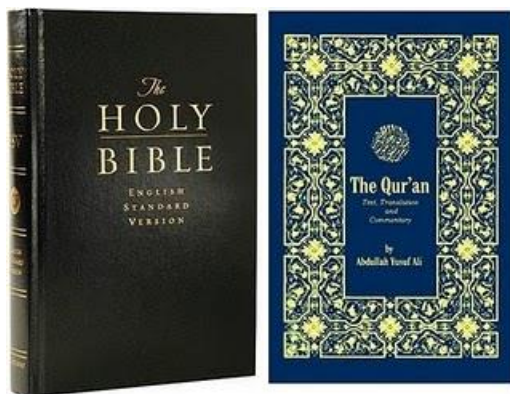
50 will they all be returned. 019.041 (Also) mention in the Book (the story of) Abraham: He was a man of Truth, a prophet. 019.042 Behold, he said to his father: "O my father! why worship that which heareth not and seeth not, and can profit thee nothing? 019.043 "O my father! to me hath come knowledge which hath not reached thee: so follow me: I will guide thee to a way that is even and straight. 019.044 "O my father! serve not Satan: for Satan is a rebel against (God) Most Gracious. 019.045 "O my father! I fear lest a Penalty afflict thee from (God) Most Gracious, so that thou become to Satan a friend." 019.046 (The father) replied: "Dost thou hate my gods, O Abraham? If thou forbear not, I will indeed stone thee: Now get away from me for a good long while!" 019.047 Abraham said: "Peace be on thee: I will pray to my Lord for thy forgiveness: for He is to me Most Gracious. 019.048 "And I will turn away from you (all) and from those whom ye invoke besides God: I will call on my Lord: perhaps, by my prayer to my Lord, I shall be not unblest." 019.049 When he had turned away from them and from those whom they worshipped besides God, We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and each one of them We made a prophet. 019.050 And We bestowed of Our Mercy on them, and We granted them lofty honour on the tongue of truth. 019.051 Also mention in the Book (the story of) Moses: for he was specially chosen, and he was a messenger (and) a prophet. 019.052 And we called him from the right side of Mount (Sinai), and made him draw near to Us, for mystic (converse). 019.053 And, out of Our Mercy, We gave him his brother Aaron, (also) a prophet. 019.054 Also mention in the Book (the story of) Isma'il: He was (strictly) true to what he promised, and he was a messenger (and) a prophet. 019.055 He used to enjoin on his people Prayer and Charity, and he was most acceptable in the sight of his Lord. 019.056 Also mention in the Book the case of Idris: He was a man of truth (and sincerity), (and) a prophet: 019.057 And We raised him to a lofty station. 019.058 Those were some of the prophets on whom God did bestow His Grace,- of the posterity of Adam, and of those who We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the posterity of Abraham and Israel of those whom We guided and chose. Whenever the Signs of (God) Most Gracious were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears. 019.059 But after them there followed a posterity who missed prayers and followed after lusts soon, then, will they face Destruction,- 019.060 Except those who repent and believe, and work righteousness: for these will enter the Garden and will not be wronged in the least,- 019.061 Gardens of Eternity, those which (God) Most Gracious has promised to His servants in the Unseen: for His promise must (necessarily) come to pass. 019.062 They will not there hear any vain discourse, but only salutations of Peace: And they will have therein their sustenance, morning and evening. 019.063 Such is the Garden which We give as an inheritance to those of Our servants who guard against Evil. 019.064 (The angels say:) "We descend not but by command of thy Lord: to Him belongeth what is before us and what is behind us, and what is between: and thy Lord never doth forget,- 019.065 "Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and of all that is between them; so worship Him, and be constant and patient in His worship:

51 knowest thou of any who is worthy of the same Name as He?" 019.066 Man says: "What! When I am dead, shall I then be raised up alive?" 019.067 But does not man call to mind that We created him before out of nothing? 019.068 So, by thy Lord, without doubt, We shall gather them together, and (also) the Evil Ones (with them); then shall We bring them forth on their knees round about Hell; 019.069 Then shall We certainly drag out from every sect all those who were worst in obstinate rebellion against (God) Most Gracious. 019.070 And certainly We know best those who are most worthy of being burned therein. 019.071 Not one of you but will pass over it: this is, with thy Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished. 019.072 But We shall save those who guarded against evil, and We shall leave the wrong-doers therein, (humbled) to their knees. 019.073 When Our Clear Signs are rehearsed to them, the Unbelievers say to those who believe, "Which of the two sides is best in point of position? Which makes the best show in council?" 019.074 But how many (countless) generations before them have we destroyed, who were even better in equipment and in glitter to the eye? 019.075 Say: "If any men go astray, (God) Most Gracious extends (the rope) to them, until, when they see the warning of God (being fulfilled) - either in punishment or in (the approach of) the Hour,- they will at length realise who is worst in position, and (who) weaker in forces! 019.076 "And God doth advance in guidance those who seek guidance: and the things that endure, Good Deeds, are best in the sight of thy Lord, as rewards, and best in respect of (their) eventual return." 019.077 Hast thou then seen the (sort of) man who rejects Our Signs, yet says: "I shall certainly be given wealth and children?" 019.078 Has he penetrated to the Unseen, or has he taken a contract with (God) Most Gracious? 019.079 Nay! We shall record what he says, and We shall add and add to his punishment. 019.080 To Us shall return all that he talks of and he shall appear before Us bare and alone. 019.081 And they have taken (for worship) gods other than God, to give them power and glory! 019.082 Instead, they shall reject their worship, and become adversaries against them. 019.083 Seest thou not that We have set the Evil Ones on against the unbelievers, to incite them with fury? 019.084 So make no haste against them, for We but count out to them a (limited) number (of days). 019.085 The day We shall gather the righteous to (God) Most Gracious, like a band presented before a king for honours, 019.086 And We shall drive the sinners to Hell, like thirsty cattle driven down to water,- 019.087 None shall have the power of intercession, but such a one as has received permission (or promise) from (God) Most Gracious. 019.088 They say: "(God) Most Gracious has begotten a son!" 019.089 Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous! 019.090 As if the skies are ready to burst, the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down in utter ruin. 019.091 That they should invoke a son for (God) Most Gracious. 019.092 For it is not consonant with the majesty of (God) Most Gracious that He should beget a son. 019.093 Not one of the beings in the heavens and the earth but must come to (God) Most Gracious as a servant. 019.094 He does take an account of them (all), and hath numbered them (all) exactly. 019.095 And everyone of them will come to

52 Him singly on the Day of Judgment. 019.096 On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (God) Most Gracious bestow love. 019.097 So have We made the (Qur'an) easy in thine own tongue, that with it thou mayest give Glad Tidings to the righteous, and warnings to people given to contention. 019.098 But how many (countless) generations before them have We destroyed? Canst thou find a single one of them (now) or hear (so much as) a whisper of them?Al-Quran

Unleashing the Treasures of Islam

(Please review these questions, it might sound offensive but it's a way to reveal the truth if you really believe in God read the Quran and bible and ask these questions to the church, priests & your self so you can find out what is truth about God & what are against the truth from God.Dont get emotional or angry but think with cool brain what is really real & the only truth of God. Dare to explore, dare to ask & dare to know. God is truth & truth is above all.Faisal)



By Abdalla S. Alothman

101 Proofs that the Quran is Not Copied from the Bible

In the Name of Allah,
the Most Compassionate,
the Ever Merciful

{Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'ân, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)?} [**Quran 47:24**]

{Nay, We fling (send down) the truth (this Qur'ân) against the falsehood (disbelief), so it destroys it, and behold, it (falsehood) is vanished. And woe to you for that (lie) which you ascribe (to Us)}. [**Quran 21:18**]

Time and time again, we Muslims have to endure accusations that our Qur'an is copied from the Bible. Below are 101 proofs that makes it impossible for the Qur'an to be copied from the Bible.

1 - Who was created first, Adam or Satan? The Quran says Satan, the Bible doesn't say anything.

2 - Who was created first, Adam or the Angels? The Quran says the Angels, the Bible doesn't say anything.

3 - Why doesn't the Bible mention that Noah had two wives, one was disobedient, and she died. And another which was saved.

4 - Why does the Bible say that Noah's ark is in Ararat but it was discovered in Al-Judyy, as the Quran says so?

5 - Why does the Bible say that God afflicted women for Eve's sin, and the Quran doesn't tell us such thing.

6 - Where does the Bible tell us about the story of Aad and Thamood ? The town of Thamoud has been discovered in Saudi Arabia—it's located in a place called Mada-in Saleh. And recently, the town of Aad has been discovered with the help of NASA's satellites. Check the link : <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ubar/>

7 - Where does the Bible mention Prophet Saleh ?

8 - Where does the Bible mention Prophet Huud ?

9 - Where does the Bible mention Prophet Shu'ayb ?

11 - Where does the Bible mention Luqmaan ?

12 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story of the Cow that happened between Moses and the Jews.

13 - Where do you find in the Quran any reference to Hosea, Malachi, Micha, Jude, Nahum, Nehemiah, Obadaiah, Esther, Joel, Ruth, etc ?

14 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story of Thul-Qarnayn.

15 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story of the People of the Cave?.

16 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story of Antioch in Surat Yasin?.

17 - Why does the Bible say that Jesus was crucified, and the Quran says that he was saved?

18 - Why does the Bible say that Abraham sacrificed his only begotten son, Isaac, and forgets that he had another son called Ishamael, who is older than Isaac?.

19 - Regarding the dream Joseph had in Genesis 37, why is it fulfilled in the Quran and not fulfilled in the Bible? Could it be because that Joseph's mother died before Joseph had his dream? Bad prophecy.

20 - Why is it that the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit had sex with Mary, and the Quran tells us that the Angel who visited Mary told her that she will bear a son, and he is ONLY informing her of what God has decreed?

21 - Why is it that the Bible tells us that Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, and the Quran tells us it was Pharaoh's wife?.

22 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that Lut was a pious prophet, and the Bible tells us that he had sex with his daughters?

23 - Why is it that the Quran tells us in Sura 19 and 20 that Moses was a special chosen prophet who was raised under God's supervision, and the Bible tells us that he died because he didn't disobeyed God?

24 - Why is it that the Bible says that it is written with the false pen of the scribe in Jeremiah 8:8, and the Quran tells us that it has no discrepancies?

55 **25** - Why is it that the Bible tells us that Pharaoh did not drown, and the Quran tells us that he drowned, but Allah left his body as a sign to mankind. When they dissected Pharaoh's body, they found out that his body had too much salt inside it. You say the Quran is copied from the Bible? I say you are ignorant! Read the Quran 10:92.

26 – Why does the Bible tells us in Genesis that God had to take a walk to find Adam, and the Quran tells us that God's knowledge doesn't require that He walks?

27 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that Jesus spoke in the cradle, but the Bible knows nothing about the childhood of Jesus?

28 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that Jesus made miracles by giving life to statues made from clay?

29 - The Quran tells us that Aaron is innocent; he did not make the golden calf, but a man called Al-Samirri (A person who organizes songs and joy) made it, while the Bible tells us that Aaron made the Golden calf.

30 - why is it that the Quranic Laws state that the thief's hands should be chopped, and the laws of Moses say something else?

31 – Why does the Quran say lash the fornicators 100 times, and the Bible says stone them.

32 - Why does the Quran orders us to fast in Ramadhan and the Bible doesn't.

33 - Why does the Quran tells us that the inheritance share of the man is as twice as much as the woman, and the Bible has no such law?

34 - Why does the Quran tells us not to transgress in wars, and the Bible teaches us to kill every living thing including plants (Joshua 6).

35 - The Bible teaches us to kill unbelievers, and leave to ourselves YOUNG virgins who never knew a man (Numbers 31). Why isn't such thing present in the Quran?

36 - The Quran tells us to free slaves to enter heaven in Surat Al-Balad. Why doesn't the Bible say such thing?

37 - Why is Satan called a FALLEN ANGEL in the Bible, and not in the Quran?

38 – Why does the Quran tells us there are Jinn (Some are good and others are bad), but the Bible doesn't mention Jinn?

56 **39** – Why is it that the Quran tells us to perform Hajj to Makkah, and the Bible doesn't tell us such thing?

40 – Why does the Quran tells us that Abraham and Ishmael built the Kaaba, while the Bible says no such thing?

41 - Why is it that the Bible condemns David as a murderer, and the Quran tells us that he was a pious sinless prophet?

42 - Why doesn't the Bible tell us the story of Solomon and Balqees?

43 - Why doesn't the Bible tell us that Solomon had Jinns who worked for him, and the Quran says so?

44 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that Solomon had soldiers from the Jinn and the Bible doesn't say so?

45 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that Solomon understood the speech of the birds and the Bible doesn't say so?

46 – Why is it that the Quran tells us that Solomon understood the speech of the ants and the Bible doesn't say so?

47 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that ONLY female bees get the honey, and the Bible doesn't say so?

48 – Why is it that the Quran tells us that the Quran mentions different levels in Paradise, and the Bible doesn't say so?

49 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that there is a tree in hell called Zaqqum, and the Bible doesn't say so?

50 - The Quran mentions Thal-Kifl as one of the prophets. Can you find his name in the Bible?

51 - Why is it that the Quran was finalized and approved by Prophet Mohammad (s), and the Bible was never approved by any prophet?

52 – Why didn't Mohammad make the Quran in chronological order just like the Bible? Why doesn't the Quran include the boring genealogies that are all over the Bible?

53 - Why is it that the Quran mentions Ishmael as an honorable prophet, and the Bible refers to him as the son of the slave woman (Galatians 4)?

57 **54 -** Why doesn't the Quran mention the story of the people of Tyre, while the Bible does?

55 - Why doesn't the Quran mentions the story of David and how he killed one of his enemies to marry his wife as the Bible did in I Samuel 25?

56 - Why is it that the Bible does not mention the story of David and Solomon with the sheep, and the Quran does?

57 - Why does the Bible mention Abraham's father by name, and the Quran mentions him by his nick?

58 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story when Abraham was put into a fire by his people and the Quran does?

59 - Why doesn't the Quran mention the interesting events that happened to Abraham in Egypt? (See BONUS #15 for one amazing example.)

60 - Why is it that the Bible tells us that John's mother was the daughter of Aaron, and the Quran doesn't say so?

61 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story of how Mary was raised, and the Quran does?

62 - Why doesn't the Quran and the Bible have the same story about the birth of Jesus? The Quran says that he was born under the remnants of a palm tree, but the Bible says he was born in a stable.

63 - According to the Bible, who are the Sabians?

64 - Where does the Bible mention the Magians?

65 - In Genesis, the Bible tells us that Jacob had a fight with God, and the Quran tells us in Surat Al-Baqara that whoever takes the Angels as enemies, he becomes an enemy of God. Why do we see this contradiction? Moreover, why didn't Mohammad (s) tell us that Jacob wrestled with God?

66 - Why is it that the Quran tells us in Surat Taaha that the staff of Moses became a REAL snake, and the Bible tells us that it only appeared to be a snake?

67 - Why is it that Moses was the one who threw his staff during the contest with the magicians, and the Bible tells us that Aaron is the one who threw it?

58 **68** - The story of Moses and the bronze snake in Numbers 21 is pretty interesting. Why is it mentioned in the Bible and not in the Quran?

69 - The Quran tells us to follow a certain procedure to cleanse ourselves before prayers in 4:43. Why doesn't the Bible give us the same instructions?

70 - The Quran tells us that Earth is round, but the Bible tells us that the Earth is flat. Why?

71 – The Quran tells us about Haroot and Maroot in Surat Al-Baqara. Who are those characters according to the Bible?

72 – Why is the story of Gog and Magog different in the Quran and the Bible?

73 - The Bible tells us that Prophet Elijah was raised to God. Why doesn't the Quran say the same thing?

74 - The Bible tells us that Solomon had many wives. Why doesn't the Quran say the same thing?

75 – The Bible tells us that God RESTED after he created the world. The Quran says that nothing makes God tired. Why?

76 - The Quran details embryology, why doesn't the Bible?

77 - The Quran mentions the names of the Gods during Noah's time in Surat Nuuh, why aren't those names present in the Bible?

78 - The Bible tells us that the whole Earth was flooded, why doesn't the Quran say the same thing?

79 – The Quran tells us that hell has 7 doors in Surat Al-Hijr (Ch. 15), why doesn't the Bible mention such thing?

80 - Why does the Quran say that Lot's wife was a bad woman, but God punishes Lot's wife in the Bible just for accidentally turning back to see what was happening in Sodom?

81 - Why does the Bible accuse Noah for getting drunk in Genesis 9, and the Quran frees him from such accusation?

82 - Anyone who curses his mother shall be put to death, according to Leviticus 20, why don't we find such a law in the Quran?

59 **83 -** Why is it that apostates are killed according to the Bible, and not killed according to the Quran? See <http://www.systemoflife.com/answering-islamophobes/abul-kasem/235-refuting-muhammad-said-death-converting-to-other-religion>

84 – Why is it that tattoos are forbidden in the Bible (Leviticus 19), and no tattoos are mentioned in the Quran?

85 – The Quran instructs us to treat those who are born from an illegal sexual intercourse as Brothers. But the Bible tells us in Leviticus 23 that they should NOT even enter the assembly of the Lord. Why didn't Mohammad (s) copy this beautiful law?

86 – The Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 25, that if two men were beating up each other, and the wife of one of them interfered, she should have her hand chopped off. Why didn't Mohammad (s) copy this beautiful law?

87 - Why does the Bible encourage Bribery in Proverbs 17, and the Quran never encourages such thing?

88 – Why does the Bible say that wisdom is a source of sorrow in Ecclesiastes 1:18, and the Quran calls wisdom a gift in 2:269?

89 - Why does God in the Quran tells us to avoid bloodshed, and the Bible God curses the sword which doesn't do bloodshed (Jeremiah 48)?

90 - When God told Zachariah that he will have a son, Zachariah asked for a sign, and God gave him a sign in Sura 19. Does the Bible mention that sign? The Bible says that he could not speak, but it's detailed to us in the Sunnah that he was able to speak when he was praying. But, when it came to communicating with others, he did so by signs. Further more, the Bible says that Zakariyya was not able to speak because he was punished by Gabriel because he did not believe the angel, while the Quran tells us that it was a sign given to him—he asked God for a sign, and God gave him a sign, not a punishment.

91 - The Bible God in Leviticus 21 tells us that hunchbacks, dwarfs, cripples, blind people, people who are deformed or disfigured, or have damaged testicles—all those people cannot become priests. The Quran tells us that there is no difference between a man and another except in piety. Why didn't Mohammad (s) copy this BEAUTIFUL law from the Bible?

92 - Why does the Bible God in Leviticus 21 forbid priests from marrying divorced women, and the Quran doesn't say such thing?

60

93 - Why is it that the Bible tells the people to call a person who doesn't listen to his father or mother "stubborn and a drunkard"? The Quran does not tell us that we should call a person who is disobedient to his parents as a drunkard. Furthermore, the Biblical law is that this person should be stoned to death, but the Quran approves no such thing. Why?

94 - The Quran tells us that we are not above the Law. We must adhere to the Laws of God. But the Bible God tells the Christians in Galatians 2 that they are under no LAW!! In other words, God made all these laws, so that Christians can see them and smile. Why didn't Mohammad tell his people that the Quranic laws are only for non-Muslims?

95 - The Bible God tells us that He will let us see the sex organs of the Jews, but the Quran mentions no such thing. Mohammad (s) had serious problems with the Jews, so why didn't he make fun of them with something similar with what we read in Nahum 3?

96 - In Romans 6, the Bible tells us that Jesus will never die again. But The Quran tells us that he will die and he will be raised at Judgment day. Why didn't Mohammad copy from Romans 6?

97 - The Bible teaches Christians to drink wine, the Quran forbids Muslims drinking. Why?

98 - 1 Corinthians 6 tells us that our bodies are members of Christ. The Quran tells us that our bodies belong to Allah, Christ has nothing to do with our bodies. Why didn't Mohammad (s) copy that from the Bible?

99 - In Ezekiel 20, the Bible God tells us that he wanted to decimate all the Israelites, but He didn't do so because it would hurt his reputation. In the Quran God tells us that He does indeed take away all the people if they were wrongful (Like the people of Noah, Sodom, Aad, and Thamood) if He wills.

100 - The Bible God has a beautiful punishment in Malachi 2. He threatens an Israelite that He would fill his face with feces!! In the Quran, God never says such things.

101 - The Bible says that the Original Sin was committed by Adam and Eve when they ate from the forbidden tree. The Quran tells us that the Original Sin was Satan's arrogance when he didn't obey God, when God ordered him to do So.

BONUS:

1 - The Quran tells us about an argument in 2:258 about Abraham and the King. Does the Bible have this story?

2 - The Quran handles divorce with care. A divorced woman stays in her house; a man should provide for her; a man should not return his wife to give her a hard time, etc. Does the Bible have the same laws regarding divorce as the Quran?

3 - The Quran tells us that Sins are not inherited. But, the Bible tells us that sins are inherited.

4 - The Quran tells us that God forgave Adam's sin after he ate from the forbidden tree. Does the Bible say that?

5 - The Quran tells us in Sura 36, that the sun and the moon are independent from one another. Does the Bible say such thing?

6 - In 25:53 and 55:19-20 the Quran tells us about how salty and pure water bodies mix. Does the Bible say such thing?

7 - In Islam we believe that there are signs to Judgment Day. Most of these signs are mentioned in the Sunnah, however, one interesting sign is a Beast/animal that would appear to the people and inform them of their status. We find this beast mentioned in the Quran in 27:82. Does the Bible say such thing?

8 - The Quran tells us that man and women are created from ONE SOUL. Does the Bible say that man and women are created from one soul? No, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 11:7 that man is the image and glory of God, while women are the glory of man.

9 - The Bible contains lots of contradictions. Why don't we find those contradictions copied in the Quran? For a list of few of the contradictions in the Bible see: http://www.bibleislam.com/bible_contradictions.php

10 - The Quran says that one of Noah's sons was not saved from the flood because he was an unbeliever (Sura 11). Does the Bible say such thing?

11 - The Quran (10:90) tells us that Pharaoh tried to seek forgiveness from God. Does the Bible say the same thing?

12 - Ishmael, the son of Abraham, is considered a Prophet and a Messenger in the Quran. Does the Bible say that "Ishmael is a prophet"?

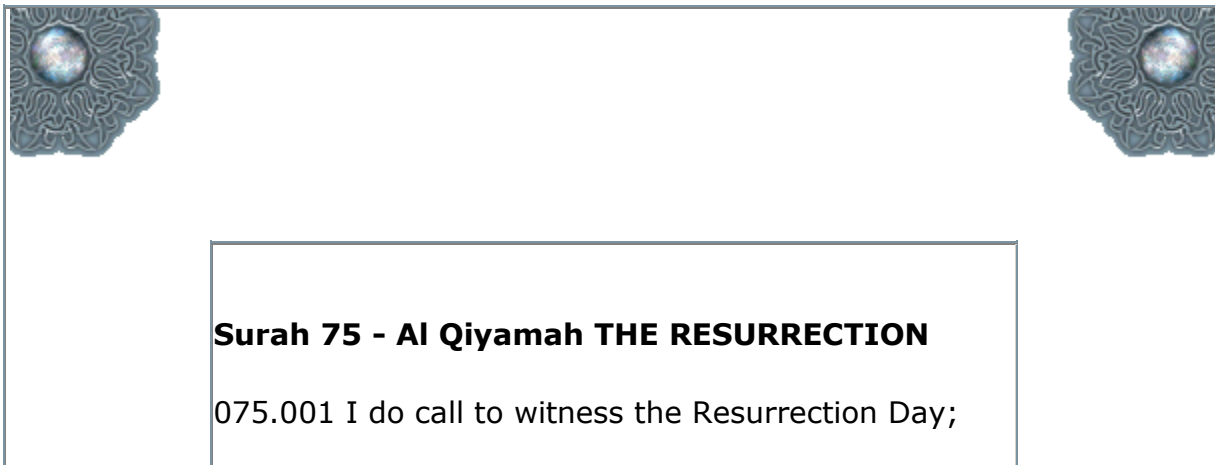
13 – We read in Surat Al-Nahl in the Quran, that the honey bee produces honey with different hues which is healthy and beneficial for mankind. Just recently, Apitherapy came up with a fantastic cure for arthritis and other chronic diseases—this therapy is called bee sting therapy, where the bee stings the patient and the venom would cure the pain. In addition, the Quran also says that the female bee is responsible for building the hive and collecting the honey. All that is proved by science today. I wonder which book of the Bible says such thing! Search the web for “Bee Sting Therapy” or “Apitherapy” to find out more.

14 - In the 16th verse of Surat Al-'Alaq, we read: {A lying sinful forelock!} Psychologists and neurologists have confirmed that it is in this area of the brain where morals and behavior are processed. Therefore, when someone decides to lie, this decision comes from that front part of the brain, and the Quran refers to that specific part when it refers to lying. Now, I wonder from which Bible passage did Mohammad (s) copy that from.

15 - In the book of Genesis we read the story about what happened to Abraham when he went to Egypt. The Bible tells us that he sold his honor by allowing his wife to become Pharaoh's concubine, so that he could be treated well instead of being killed. Now there is nowhere in the Quran where such accusation is attributed to Prophet Abraham. I wonder why didn't Prophet Mohammad (s) copy such thing from the Bible.

Walhamdulillah Rabbil Alameen

<http://www.islamictreasure.com/>



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075.002 And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit: (Eschew Evil).

075.003 Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones?

075.004 Nay, We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers.

075.005 But man wishes to do wrong (even) in the time in front of him.

075.006 He questions: "When is the Day of Resurrection?"

075.007 At length, when the sight is dazed,

075.008 And the moon is buried in darkness.

075.009 And the sun and moon are joined together,-

075.010 That Day will Man say: "Where is the refuge?"

075.011 By no means! No place of safety!

075.012 Before thy Lord (alone), that Day will be the place of rest.

075.013 That Day will Man be told (all) that he put forward, and all that he put back.

075.014 Nay, man will be evidence against himself,

075.015 Even though he were to put up his excuses.

075.016 Move not thy tongue concerning the (Qur'an) to make haste therewith.

075.017 It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it:

075.018 But when We have promulgated it, follow thou its recital (as promulgated):

075.019 Nay more, it is for Us to explain it (and

075.020 Nay, (ye men!) but ye love the fleeting life,

075.021 And leave alone the Hereafter.

075.022 Some faces, that Day, will beam (in
brightness and beauty);-

075.023 Looking towards their Lord;

075.024 And some faces, that Day, will be sad and
dismal,

075.025 In the thought that some back-breaking
calamity was about to be inflicted on them;

075.026 Yea, when (the soul) reaches to the collar-
bone (in its exit),

075.027 And there will be a cry, "Who is a magician
(to restore him)?"

075.028 And he will conclude that it was (the Time)
of Parting;

075.029 And one leg will be joined with another:

075.030 That Day the Drive will be (all) to thy Lord!

075.031 So he gave nothing in charity, nor did he
pray!-

075.032 But on the contrary, he rejected Truth and
turned away!

075.033 Then did he stalk to his family in full conceit!

075.034 Woe to thee, (O men!), yea, woe!

075.035 Again, Woe to thee, (O men!), yea, woe!

075.036 Does man think that he will be left
uncontrolled, (without purpose)?

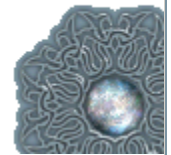
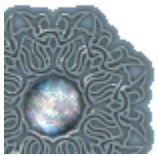
075.037 Was he not a drop of sperm emitted

Pg65 (in lowly form)?

075.038 Then did he become a clinging clot; then did (God) make and fashion (him) in due proportion.

075.039 And of him He made two sexes, male and female.

075.040 Has not He, (the same), the power to give life to the dead?



112. Surah Al-Ikhlaas or At-Tauhid (The Purity)

1. Say (O Muhammad : "He is Allah, (the) One.
2. "*Allah-us-Samad* (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks).
3. "He begets not, nor was He begotten;
4. "And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him." Al-Quran

God does not born or die he is forever. Jesus, Moses, Mohammad & all other people of Bible, Quran & Torah were great messengers prophets of god not sons of god they were created by 1 true god, creator, Allah. So any creation can't be the 1 creator Allah. So they were messengers, prophets of god. How can creator be part of what he has created Himself!!! So he is not part of any creation again he is not a creation & has no partners no father ,mother, daughter ,son, brother, sister ,wife & no gender simply unique beyond comparable & 1 & 1 only. From Adam to Jesus god sent his messages for every generation or period of time but it was always destroyed by mankind & the devils conspiracy to take mankind towards hell. Because all previous books were massed up by humans Allah sent his last messenger not son or god, but messenger Mohammad & sent him Quran & it's messages to guide humans towards Allah & heaven. Allah has promised to Keep Quran same until the Day of Judgment & challenged humans to create another accurate book like Quran & said if you can't then surrender to your lord (the only way of peace&heaven). Majority of things science has discovered until now 80% of Quran had all those undiscovered answers from the last 1400years when science didn't have any answers. The other 20% answer was & is in Quran. Maybe it will take science another 1400years to find it. All 100% answers are in Quran. Science can't prove a single verse of Quran wrong. If you do a research on Quran, bible and science you will find facts. Facts are stranger than fiction. In the bible it says Jesus bowed his head on floor just like Muslims bow their head on floor while praying .You should do research on bible, Quran & science if you believe in god so you can find facts on Islam. If I teach a parrot a message & send it to someone & parrot tells the message to that person and leaves & that person starts saying that parrot is my son that would make no sense, because that was my messenger not son. Jesus was taken up alive & after that people started calling him son of god. He came to establish Islam & was a messenger of 1 god. Christianity started after Jesus was gone, Jesus will

67 comeback & die as a human & Muslim. Quran is the only accurate 100% words of god & word of god can't have errors then it would not be word of god & according to science bibles & Torahs has many errors but they can't prove a verse in Quran wrong. Muslims believe there is no god but Allah & Prophet Mohammad is the last & final prophet & messenger of Allah.

Killing innocent human is a major sin in Islam & Islam is against terrorism. prophet Muhammad said no one has the right to burn anything only god has the right to burn someone which is in hell. Love peace for all. May god bless & save us all.

Biography of Muhammad(pbu) by a Non-Muslim

Muhammad |

by Prof. K. S. Ramakrishna Rao, Head of the Dept. of Philosophy, Govt. College for Women. University of Mysore, Mandya-571401 (Karnataka, India).

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In the desert of Arabia was Mohammad born, according to Muslim historians, on April 20, 571. The name means highly praised. He is to me the greatest mind among all the sons of Arabia. He means so much more than all the poets and kings that preceded him in that impenetrable desert of red sand.

When he appeared Arabia was a desert — a nothing. Out of nothing a new world was fashioned by the mighty spirit of Mohammad — a new life, a new culture, a new civilization, a new kingdom which extended from Morocco to Indies and influenced the thought and life of three continents — Asia, Africa and Europe.

When I thought of writing on Mohammad the prophet, I was a bit hesitant because it was to write about a religion I do not profess and it is a delicate matter to do so for there are many persons professing various religions and belonging to diverse school of thought and denominations even in same religion. Though it is sometimes, claimed that religion is entirely personal yet it can not be gain-said that it has a tendency to envelop the whole universe seen as well unseen. It somehow permeates something or other our hearts, our souls, our minds their conscious as well as subconscious and unconscious levels too. The problem assumes overwhelming importance when there is a deep conviction that our past, present and future all hang by the soft delicate, tender silked cord. If we further happen to be highly sensitive, the center of gravity is very likely to be always in a state of extreme tension. Looked at from this point of view, the less said about other religion the better. Let our religions be deeply hidden and embedded in the resistance of our innermost hearts fortified by unbroken seals on our lips.

But there is another aspect of this problem. Man lives in society. Our lives are bound with the lives of others willingly or unwillingly, directly or indirectly. We eat the food grown in the same soil, drink water,

from the same the same spring and breathe the same air. Even while staunchly holding our own views, it would be helpful, if we try to adjust ourselves to our surroundings, if we also know to some extent, how the mind of our neighbor moves and what the main springs of his actions are. From this angle of vision it is highly desirable that one should try to know all religions of the world, in the proper spirit, to promote mutual understanding and better appreciation of our neighborhood, immediate and remote.

Further, our thoughts are not scattered as appear to be on the surface. They have got themselves crystallized around a few nuclei in the form of great world religions and living faiths that guide and motivate the lives of millions that inhabit this earth of ours. It is our duty, in one sense if we have the ideal of ever becoming a citizen of the world before us, to make a little attempt to know the great religions and system of philosophy that have ruled mankind.

In spite of these preliminary remarks, the ground in these field of religion, where there is often a conflict between intellect and emotion is so slippery that one is constantly reminded of fools that rush in where angels fear to tread. It is also not so complex from another point of view. The subject of my writing is about the tenets of a religion which is historic and its prophet who is also a historic personality. Even a

hostile critic like Sir William Muir speaking about the holy Quran says that. "There is probably in the world no other book which has remained twelve centuries with so pure text." I may also add Prophet Mohammad is also a historic personality, every event of whose life has been most carefully recorded and even the minutest details preserved intact for the posterity. His life and works are not wrapped in mystery.

My work today is further lightened because those days are fast disappearing when Islam was highly misrepresented by some of its critics for reasons political and otherwise. Prof. Bevan writes in Cambridge Medieval History, "Those account of Mohammad and Islam which were published in Europe before the beginning of 19th century are now to be regarded as literary curiosities." My problem is to write this monograph is easier because we are now generally not fed on this kind of history and much time need be spent on pointing out our misrepresentation of Islam.

The theory of Islam and Sword for instance is not heard now frequently in any quarter worth the name. The principle of Islam that there is no compulsion in religion is well known. Gibbon, a historian of world repute says, "A pernicious tenet has been imputed to Mohammadans, the duty of extirpating all the religions by sword." This charge based on ignorance and bigotry, says the eminent historian, is refuted by Quran, by history of Musalman conquerors and by their public and legal toleration of Christian worship. The great success of Mohammad's life had been effected by sheer moral force, without a stroke of sword.

But in pure self-defense, after repeated efforts of conciliation had utterly failed, circumstances dragged him into the battlefield. But the prophet of Islam changed the whole strategy of the battlefield. The total number of casualties in all the wars that took place during his lifetime when the whole Arabian Peninsula came under his banner, does not exceed a few hundreds in all. But even on the battlefield he taught the Arab barbarians to pray, to pray not individually, but in congregation to God the Almighty. During the dust and storm of warfare whenever the time for prayer came, and it comes five times a every day, the congregation prayer had not to be postponed even on the battlefield. A party had to be engaged in bowing their heads before God while other was engaged with the enemy. After finishing the prayers, the two parties had to exchange their positions. To the Arabs, who would fight for forty years on the slight provocation that a camel belonging to the guest of one tribe had strayed into the grazing land belonging to other tribe and both sides had fought till they lost 70,000 lives in all; threatening the extinction of both the tribes to such furious Arabs, the Prophet of Islam taught self-control and discipline to the extent of

praying even on the battlefield. In an age of barbarism, the Battlefield itself was humanized and strict instructions were issued not to cheat, not to break trust, not to mutilate, not to kill a child or woman or an old man, not to hew down date palm nor burn it, not to cut a fruit tree, not to molest any person engaged in worship. His own treatment with his bitterest enemies is the noblest example for his followers. At the conquest of Mecca, he stood at the zenith of his power. The city which had refused to listen to his mission, which had tortured him and his followers, which had driven him and his people into exile and which had unrelentingly persecuted and boycotted him even when he had taken refuge in a place more than 200 miles away, that city now lay at his feet. By the laws of war he could have justly avenged all the cruelties inflicted on him and his people. But what treatment did he accord to them? Mohammad's heart flowed with affection and he declared, "This day, there is no REPROOF against you and you are all free." "This day" he proclaimed, "I trample under my feet all distinctions between man and man, all hatred between man and man."

This was one of the chief objects why he permitted war in self defense, that is to unite human beings. And when once this object was achieved, even his worst enemies were pardoned. Even those who killed his beloved uncle, Hamazah, mangled his body, ripped it open, even chewed a piece of his liver.

The principles of universal brotherhood and doctrine of the equality of mankind which he proclaimed represents one very great contribution of Mohammad to the social uplift of humanity. All great religions have preached the same doctrine but the prophet of Islam had put this theory into actual practice and its value will be fully recognized, perhaps centuries hence, when international consciousness being awakened, racial prejudices may disappear and greater brotherhood of humanity come into existence.

Miss. Sarojini Naidu speaking about this aspect of Islam says, "It was the first religion that preached and practiced democracy; for in the mosque, when the minaret is sounded and the worshipers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim, God alone is great." The great poetess of India continues, "I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes a man instinctively a brother. When you meet an Egyptian, an Algerian and Indian and a Turk in London, it matters not that Egypt is the motherland of one and India is the motherland of another."

Mahatma Gandhi, in his inimitable style, says "Some one has said that Europeans in South Africa dread the advent Islam — Islam that civilized Spain, Islam that took the torch light to Morocco and preached to the world the Gospel of brotherhood. The Europeans of South Africa dread the Advent of Islam. They may claim equality with the white races. They may well dread it, if brotherhood is a sin. If it is equality of colored races then their dread is well founded."

Every year, during the Haj, the world witnesses the wonderful spectacle of this international Exhibition of Islam in leveling all distinctions of race, color and rank. Not only the Europeans, the African, the Arabian, the Persian, the Indians, the Chinese all meet together in Medina as members of one divine family, but they are clad in one dress every person in two simple pieces of white seamless cloth, one piece round the loin the other piece over the shoulders, bare head without pomp or ceremony, repeating "Here am I O God; at thy command; thou art one and alone; Here am I." Thus there remains nothing to differentiate the high from the low and every pilgrim carries home the impression of the international significance of Islam.

In the opinion of Prof. Hurgonje "the league of nations founded by prophet of Islam put the principle of international unity of human brotherhood on such Universal foundations as to show candle to other

nations.” In the words of same Professor “the fact is that no nation of the world can show a parallel to what Islam has done the realization of the idea of the League of Nations.”

The prophet of Islam brought the reign of democracy in its best form. The Caliph Caliph Ali and the son in-law of the prophet, the Caliph Mansur, Abbas, the son of Caliph Mamun and many other caliphs and kings had to appear before the judge as ordinary men in Islamic courts. Even today we all know how the black Negroes were treated by the civilized white races. Consider the state of BILAL, a Negro Slave, in the days of the prophet of Islam nearly 14 centuries ago. The office of calling Muslims to prayer was considered to be of status in the early days of Islam and it was offered to this Negro slave. After the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet ordered him to call for prayer and the Negro slave, with his black color and his thick lips, stood over the roof of the holy mosque at Mecca called the Ka’ba the most historic and the holiest mosque in the Islamic world, when some proud Arabs painfully cried loud, “Oh, this black Negro Slave, woe be to him. He stands on the roof of holy Ka’ba to call for prayer.” At that moment, the prophet announced to the world, this verse of the holy QURAN for the first time. “O mankind, surely we have created you, families and tribes, so you may know one another. Surely, the most honorable of you with God is MOST RIGHTEOUS AMONG you. Surely, God is Knowing, Aware.”

And these words of the holy Quran created such a mighty transformation that the Caliph of Islam, the purest of Arabs by birth, offered their daughter in marriage to this Negro Slave, and whenever, the second Caliph of Islam, known to history as Umar the great, the commander of faithful, saw this Negro slave, he immediately stood in reverence and welcomed him by “Here come our master; Here come our lord.” What a tremendous change was brought by Quran in the Arabs, the proudest people at that time on the earth. This is the reason why Goethe, the greatest of German poets, speaking about the Holy Quran declared that, “This book will go on exercising through all ages a most potent influence.” This is also the reason why George Bernard Shaw says, “If any religion has a chance or ruling over England, say, Europe, within the next 100 years, it is Islam”.

It is this same democratic spirit of Islam that emancipated women from the bondage of man. Sir Charles Edward Archibald Hamilton says “Islam teaches the inherent sinlessness of man. It teaches that man and woman and woman have come from the same essence, posses the same soul and have been equipped with equal capabilities for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments.”

The Arabs had a very strong tradition that one who can smite with the spear and can wield the sword would inherit. But Islam came as the defender of the weaker sex and entitled women to share the inheritance of their parents. It gave women, centuries ago right of owning property, yet it was only 12 centuries later, in 1881, that England, supposed to be the cradle of democracy adopted this institution of Islam and the act was called “the married woman act”, but centuries earlier, the Prophet of Islam had proclaimed that “Woman are twin halves of men. The rights of women are sacred. See that women maintained rights granted to them.”

Islam is not directly concerned with political and economic systems, but indirectly and in so far as political and economic affairs influence man’s conduct, it does lay down some very important principles to govern economic life. According to Prof. Massignon, it maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites and has always in view the building of character which is the basis of civilization. This is secured by its law of inheritance, by an organized system of charity known as Zakat, and by regarding as illegal all anti-social practices in the economic field like monopoly, usury, securing of predetermined unearned income and increments, cornering markets, creating monopolies, creating an artificial scarcity of any commodity in order to force the prices to rise. Gambling is illegal. Contribution to schools, to places of worship, hospitals, digging of wells, opening of orphanages are highest acts of virtue.

Orphanages have sprung for the first time, it is said, under the teaching of the prophet of Islam. The world owes its orphanages to this prophet born an orphan. "Good all this" says Carlyle about Mohammad. "The natural voice of humanity, of pity and equity, dwelling in the heart of this wild son of nature, speaks."

A historian once said a great man should be judged by three tests: Was he found to be of true metal by his contemporaries? Was he great enough to raise above the standards of his age? Did he leave anything as permanent legacy to the world at large? This list may be further extended but all these three tests of greatness are eminently satisfied to the highest degree in case of prophet Mohammad. Some illustrations of the last two have already been mentioned.

The first is: Was the Prophet of Islam found to be of true metal by his contemporaries?

Historical records show that all the contemporaries of Mohammad both friends and foes, acknowledged the sterling qualities, the spotless honesty, the noble virtues, the absolute sincerity and every trustworthiness of the apostle of Islam in all walks of life and in every sphere of human activity. Even the Jews and those who did not believe in his message, adopted him as the arbiter in their personal disputes by virtue of his perfect impartiality. Even those who did not believe in his message were forced to say "O Mohammad, we do not call you a liar, but we deny him who has given you a book and inspired you with a message." They thought he was one possessed. They tried violence to cure him. But the best of them saw that a new light had dawned on him and they hastened him to seek the enlightenment. It is a notable feature in the history of prophet of Islam that his nearest relation, his beloved cousin and his bosom friends, who know him most intimately, were not thoroughly imbued with the truth of his mission and were convinced of the genuineness of his divine inspiration. If these men and women, noble, intelligent, educated and intimately acquainted with his private life had perceived the slightest signs of deception, fraud, earthliness, or lack of faith in him, Mohammad's moral hope of regeneration, spiritual awakening, and social reform would all have been foredoomed to a failure and whole edifice would have crumbled to pieces in a moment. On the contrary, we find that devotion of his followers was such that he was voluntarily acknowledged as dictator of their lives. They braved for him persecutions and danger; they trusted, obeyed and honored him even in the most excruciating torture and severest mental agony caused by excommunication even unto death. Would this have been so, had they noticed the slightest backsliding in their master?

Read the history of the early converts to Islam, and every heart would melt at the sight of the brutal treatment of innocent Muslim men and women.

Sumayya, an innocent woman, is cruelly torn into pieces with spears. An example is made of "Yassir whose legs are tied to two camels and the beast were driven in opposite directions", Khabbab bin Arth is made lie down on the bed of burning coal with the brutal legs of their merciless tyrant on his breast so that he may not move and this makes even the fat beneath his skin melt. "Khabban bin Adi is put to death in a cruel manner by mutilation and cutting off his flesh piece-meal." In the midst of his tortures, being asked whether he did not wish Mohammad in his place while he was in his house with his family, the sufferer cried out that he was gladly prepared to sacrifice himself his family and children and why was it that these sons and daughters of Islam not only surrendered to their prophet their allegiance but also made a gift of their hearts and souls to their master? Is not the intense faith and conviction on part of immediate followers of Mohammad, the noblest testimony to his sincerity and to his utter self-absorption in his appointed task?

And these men were not of low station or inferior mental caliber. Around him in quite early days, gathered what was best and noblest in Mecca, its flower and cream, men of position, rank, wealth and

culture, and from his own kith and kin, those who knew all about his life. All the first four Caliphs, with their towering personalities, were converts of this period.

The Encyclopedia Britannica says that “Mohammad is the most successful of all Prophets and religious personalities”.

But the success was not the result of mere accident. It was not a hit of fortune. It was a recognition of fact that he was found to be true metal by his contemporaries. It was the result of his admirable and all compelling personality.

The personality of Mohammad! It is most difficult to get into the truth of it. Only a glimpse of it I can catch. What a dramatic succession of picturesque scenes. There is Mohammad the Prophet, there is Mohammad the General; Mohammad the King; Mohammad the Warrior; Mohammad the Businessman; Mohammad the Preacher; Mohammad the Philosopher; Mohammad the Statesman; Mohammad the Orator; Mohammad the reformer; Mohammad the Refuge of orphans; Mohammad the Protector of slaves; Mohammad the Emancipator of women; Mohammad the Law-giver; Mohammad the Judge; Mohammad the Saint.

And in all these magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is like, a hero..

Orphanhood is extreme of helplessness and his life upon this earth began with it; Kingship is the height of the material power and it ended with it. From an orphan boy to a persecuted refugee and then to an overlord, spiritual as well as temporal, of a whole nation and Arbiter of its destinies, with all its trials and temptations, with all its vicissitudes and changes, its lights and shades, its up and downs, its terror and splendor, he has stood the fire of the world and came out unscathed to serve as a model in every face of life. His achievements are not limited to one aspect of life, but cover the whole field of human conditions.

If for instance, greatness consist in the purification of a nation, steeped in barbarism and immersed in absolute moral darkness, that dynamic personality who has transformed, refined and uplifted an entire nation, sunk low as the Arabs were, and made them the torch-bearer of civilization and learning, has every claim to greatness. If greatness lies in unifying the discordant elements of society by ties of brotherhood and charity, the prophet of the desert has got every title to this distinction. If greatness consists in reforming those warped in degrading and blind superstition and pernicious practices of every kind, the prophet of Islam has wiped out superstitions and irrational fear from the hearts of millions. If it lies in displaying high morals, Mohammad has been admitted by friend and foe as Al Amin, or the faithful. If a conqueror is a great man, here is a person who rose from helpless orphan and an humble creature to be the ruler of Arabia, the equal to Chosroes and Caesars, one who founded great empire that has survived all these 14 centuries. If the devotion that a leader commands is the criterion of greatness, the prophet's name even today exerts a magic charm over millions of souls, spread all over the world.

He had not studied philosophy in the school of Athens of Rome, Persia, India, or China. Yet, He could proclaim the highest truths of eternal value to mankind. Illiterate himself, he could yet speak with an eloquence and fervor which moved men to tears, to tears of ecstasy. Born an orphan blessed with no worldly goods, he was loved by all. He had studied at no military academy; yet he could organize his forces against tremendous odds and gained victories through the moral forces which he marshaled. Gifted men with genius for preaching are rare. Descartes included the perfect preacher among the rarest kind in the world. Hitler in his Mein Kamp has expressed a similar view. He says “A great theorist is seldom a great leader. An Agitator is more likely to posses these qualities. He will always be a great leader. For leadership means ability to move masses of men. The talents to produce ideas has nothing in common

with capacity for leadership.” “But”, he says, “The Union of theorists, organizer and leader in one man, is the rarest phenomenon on this earth; Therein consists greatness.”

In the person of the Prophet of Islam the world has seen this rarest phenomenon walking on the earth, walking in flesh and blood.

And more wonderful still is what the reverend Bosworth Smith remarks, “Head of the state as well as the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but, he was pope without the pope’s claims, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without an standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue. If ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a right divine It was Mohammad, for he had all the power without instruments and without its support. He cared not for dressing of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life.”

After the fall of Mecca, more than one million square miles of land lay at his feet, Lord of Arabia, he mended his own shoes and coarse woolen garments, milked the goats, swept the hearth, kindled the fire and attended the other menial offices of the family. The entire town of Medina where he lived grew wealthy in the later days of his life. Everywhere there was gold and silver in plenty and yet in those days of prosperity many weeks would elapse without a fire being kindled in the hearth of the king of Arabia, His food being dates and water. His family would go hungry many nights successively because they could not get anything to eat in the evening. He slept on no soften bed but on a palm mat, after a long busy day to spend most of his night in prayer, often bursting with tears before his creator to grant him strength to discharge his duties. As the reports go, his voice would get choked with weeping and it would appear as if a cooking pot was on fire and boiling had commenced. On the very day of his death his only assets were few coins a part of which went to satisfy a debt and rest was given to a needy person who came to his house for charity. The clothes in which he breathed his last had many patches. The house from where light had spread to the world was in darkness because there was no oil in the lamp.

Circumstances changed, but the prophet of God did not. In victory or in defeat, in power or in adversity, in affluence or in indigence, he is the same man, disclosed the same character. Like all the ways and laws of God, Prophets of God are unchangeable.

An honest man, as the saying goes, is the noblest work of God, Mohammad was more than honest. He was human to the marrow of his bones. Human sympathy, human love was the music of his soul. To serve man, to elevate man, to purify man, to educate man, in a word to humanize man-this was the object of his mission, the be-all and end all of his life. In thought, in word, in action he had the good of humanity as his sole inspiration, his sole guiding principle.

He was most unostentatious and selfless to the core. What were the titles he assumed? Only true servant of God and His Messenger. Servant first, and then a messenger. A Messenger and prophet like many other prophets in every part of the world, some known to you, many not known you. If one does not believe in any of these truths one ceases to be a Muslim. It is an article of faith.

“Looking at the circumstances of the time and unbounded reverence of his followers” says a western writer “the most miraculous thing about Mohammad is, that he never claimed the power of working miracles.” Miracles were performed but not to propagate his faith and were attributed entirely to God and his inscrutable ways. He would plainly say that he was a man like others. He had no treasures of earth or heaven. Nor did he claim to know the secrets of that lie in womb of future. All this was in an age when miracles were supposed to be ordinary occurrences, at the back and call of the commonest saint, when the whole atmosphere was surcharged with supernaturalism in Arabia and outside Arabia.

He turned the attention of his followers towards the study of nature and its laws, to understand them and appreciate the Glory of God. The Quran says,

“God did not create the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in play. He did not create them all but with the truth. But most men do not know.”

The world is not illusion, nor without purpose. It has been created with the truth. The number of verses inviting close observation of nature are several times more than those that relate to prayer, fasting, pilgrimage etc. all put together. The Muslim under its influence began to observe nature closely and this gave birth to the scientific spirit of the observation and experiment which was unknown to the Greeks. While the Muslim Botanist Ibn Baitar wrote on Botany after collecting plants from all parts of the world, described by Myer in his *Gesch. der Botanik*, a monument of industry, while Al Byruni traveled for forty years to collect mineralogical specimens, and Muslim Astronomers made some observations extending even over twelve years. Aristotle wrote on Physics without performing a single experiment, wrote on natural history, carelessly stating without taking the trouble to ascertain the most verifiable fact that men have more teeth than animal. Galen, the greatest authority on classical anatomy informed that the lower jaw consists of two bones, a statement which is accepted unchallenged for centuries till Abdul Lateef takes the trouble to examine a human skeleton. After enumerating several such instances, Robert Priffault concludes in his well known book *The making of humanity*, “The debt of our science to the Arabs does not consist in starting discovers or revolutionary theories. Science owes a great more to Arabs culture; it owes its existence.” The same writer says “The Greeks systematized, generalized and theorized but patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation, experimental inquiry, were altogether alien to Greek temperament. What we call science arose in Europe as result of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of Mathematics in form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and these methods, concludes the same author, were introduced into the European world by Arabs.”

It is the same practical character of the teaching of Prophet Mohammad that gave birth to the scientific spirit, that has also sanctified the daily labors and the so called mundane affairs. The Quran says that God has created man to worship him but the word worship has a connotation of its own. Gods worship is not confined to prayer alone, but every act that is done with the purpose of winning approval of God and is for the benefit of the humanity comes under its purview. Islam sanctifies life and all its pursuits provided they are performed with honesty, justice and pure intents. It obliterates the age-long distinction between the sacred and profane. The Quran says if you eat clean things and thank God for it, it is an act of worship. It is saying of the prophet of Islam that morsel of food that one places in the mouth of his wife is an act of virtue to be rewarded by God. Another tradition of the Prophet says “He who is satisfying the desire of his heart will be rewarded by God provided the methods adopted are permissible.” A person was listening to him exclaimed ‘O Prophet of God, he is answering the calls of passions, is only satisfying the craving of his heart. Forthwith came the reply, “Had he adopted an awful method for the satisfaction of his urge, he would have been punished; then why should he not be rewarded for following the right course.”

This new conception of religion that it should also devote itself to the betterment of this life rather than concern itself exclusively with super mundane affairs, has led to a new orientation of moral values. Its abiding influence on the common relations of mankind in the affairs of every day life, its deep power over the masses, its regulation of their conception of rights and duty, its suitability and adaptability to the ignorant savage and the wise philosopher are characteristic features of the teaching of the Prophet of Islam.

But it should be most carefully born in mind this stress on good actions is not the sacrifice correctness of faith. While there are various school of thought, one praising faith at the expense of deeds, another exhausting various acts to the detriment of correct belief, Islam is based on correct faith and righteous actions. Means are important as the end and ends are as important as the means. It is an organic Unity. Together they live and thrive. Separate them and both decay and die. In Islam faith can not be divorced from the action. Right knowledge should be transferred into right action to produce the right results. How often the words came in Quran — Those who believe and do good thing, they alone shall enter paradise. Again and again, not less than fifty times these words are repeated as if too much stress can not be laid on them. Contemplation is encouraged but mere contemplation is not the goal. Those who believe and do nothing can not exist in Islam. These who believe and do wrong are inconceivable. Divine law is the law of effort and not of ideals. It chalks out for the men the path of eternal progress from knowledge to action and from action to satisfaction.

But what is the correct faith from which right action spontaneously proceeds resulting in complete satisfaction. Here the central doctrine of Islam is the Unity of God. There is no God but God is the pivot from which hangs the whole teaching and practice of Islam. He is unique not only as regards his divine being but also as regards his divine attributes.

As regards the attributes of God, Islam adopts here as in other things too, the law of golden mean. It avoids on the one hand, the view of God which divests the divine being of every attribute and rejects, on the other, the view which likens him to things material. The Quran says, On the one hand, there is nothing which is like him, on the other, it affirms that he is Seeing, Hearing, Knowing. He is the King who is without a stain of fault or deficiency, the mighty ship of His power floats upon the ocean of justice and equity. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is the Guardian over all. Islam does not stop with this positive statement. It adds further which is its most special characteristic, the negative aspects of problem. There is also no one else who is guardian over everything. He is the meander of every breakage, and no one else is the meander of any breakage. He is the restorer of every loss and no one else is the restorer of any loss what-so-ever. There is no God but one God, above any need, the maker of bodies, creator of souls, the Lord of the day of judgment, and in short, in the words of Quran, to him belong all excellent qualities.

Regarding the position of man in relation to the Universe, the Quran says:

“God has made subservient to you whatever is on the earth or in universe. You are destined to rule over the Universe.”

But in relation to God, the Quran says:

“O man God has bestowed on you excellent faculties and has created life and death to put you to test in order to see whose actions are good and who has deviated from the right path.”

In spite of free will which he enjoys, to some extent, every man is born under certain circumstances and continues to live under certain circumstances beyond his control. With regard to this God says, according to Islam, it is my will to create any man under condition that seem best to me. cosmic plans finite mortals can not fully comprehend. But I will certainly test you in prosperity as well in adversity, in health as well as in sickness, in heights as well as in depths. My ways of testing differ from man to man, from hour to hour. In adversity do not despair and do resort to unlawful means. It is but a passing phase. In prosperity do not forget God. God-gifts are given only as trusts. You are always on trial, every moment on test. In this sphere of life there is not to reason why, there is but to do and die. If you live in accordance with God; and if you die, die in the path of God. You may call it fatalism. but this type of fatalism is a

condition of vigorous increasing effort, keeping you ever on the alert. Do not consider this temporal life on earth as the end of human existence. There is a life after death and it is eternal. Life after death is only a connection link, a door that opens up hidden reality of life. Every action in life however insignificant, produces a lasting effect. It is correctly recorded somehow. Some of the ways of God are known to you, but many of his ways are hidden from you. What is hidden in you and from you in this world will be unrolled and laid open before you in the next. the virtuous will enjoy the blessing of God which the eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor has it entered into the hearts of men to conceive of they will march onward reaching higher and higher stages of evolution. Those who have wasted opportunity in this life shall under the inevitable law, which makes every man taste of what he has done, be subjugated to a course of treatment of the spiritual diseases which they have brought about with their own hands. Beware, it is terrible ordeal. Bodily pain is torture, you can bear somehow. Spiritual pain is hell, you will find it almost unbearable. Fight in this life itself the tendencies of the spirit prone to evil, tempting to lead you into iniquities ways. Reach the next stage when the self-accusing spirit in your conscience is awakened and the soul is anxious to attain moral excellence and revolt against disobedience. This will lead you to the final stage of the soul at rest, contented with God, finding its happiness and delight in him alone. The soul no more stumbles. The stage of struggle passes away. Truth is victorious and falsehood lays down its arms. All complexes will then be resolved. Your house will not be divided against itself. Your personality will get integrated round the central core of submission to the will of God and complete surrender to his divine purpose. All hidden energies will then be released. The soul then will have peace. God will then address you:

“O thou soul that art at rest, and retest fully contented with thy Lord return to thy Lord. He pleased with thee and thou pleased with him; So enter among my servants and enter into my paradise.”

This is the final goal for man; to become, on the, one hand, the master of the universe and on the other, to see that his soul finds rest in his Lord, that not only his Lord will be pleased with him but that he is also pleased with his Lord. Contentment, complete contentment, satisfaction, complete satisfaction, peace, complete peace. The love of God is his food at this stage and he drinks deep at the fountain of life. Sorrow and defeat do not overwhelm him and success does not find him in vain and exulting.

The western nations are only trying to become the master of the Universe. But their souls have not found peace and rest.

Thomas Carlyle, struck by this philosophy of life writes “and then also Islam-that we must submit to God; that our whole strength lies in resigned submission to Him, whatsoever he does to us, the thing he sends to us, even if death and worse than death, shall be good, shall be best; we resign ourselves to God.” The same author continues “If this be Islam, says Goethe, do we not all live in Islam?” Carlyle himself answers this question of Goethe and says “Yes, all of us that have any moral life, we all live so. This is yet the highest wisdom that heaven has revealed to our earth.”

Evolution in the Holy Quran:

It is mentioned in the quran 1400 years ago even before scientists found the genetic similarities of monkeys ,apes & humans. what scientists have found is true but their opinion of the theory of evolution is wrong. Quran is word of god & it has the information of past,present& future.God reveled to prophet Muhammad whatever god wanted to & kept some information only to god by reveling some & not reveling some.But still quran is 1 great source of information from God. Because of their constant defiance and blasphemy of GOD Almighty's Divine and Holy Words,

some bad Jews were transformed into swines and apes during Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) times:but not the good one's & definitely not all jews okay.

"Say: "Shall I point out to you something much worse than this, (as judged) by the treatment it received from God? those who incurred the curse of God and His wrath, those of whom some He transformed into apes and swine, those who worshipped evil;- these are (many times) worse in rank, and far more astray from the even path!" (The Noble Quran, 5:60)"

First 2 of the 10 Commandments

I am the Lord thy God,Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images.

SURAT AL IKHLAS (MAKKAH)

- 1) Say he is Allah one & only
- (2) Allah, the eternal, absolute
- 3) He begets not, nor is he begotten
- (4) And there is none like unto him (Al-Quran)

The original quran is 100% accurate in the Arabic language & its 1 only.But in English there are couple of translations of the same 1 arabic quran.so if some 1 wants to understand the quran properly he should read it in couple of translations of the same 1 arabic quran & learn some Arabic to understand the quran more accurately.

Quran is not a copy of anything & there is no evidence to say such.statements in quran are against torah&bible.torah & bible has so many errors. & according to science 80%of quran matches with science&other 20%of quran science doesn't have answers maybe it will take couple of hundred years to find out for science.acording to historians original bible doesn't exist anymore. According to islam torah&bible were books of allah but humans have destroyed their originality. so quran is the last &final word of god allah &Muhammad is the last&final messenger of allah. Quran is not copy of anything and its 100% word of god in islam. According to science torah &bibles statements have errors &Qurans statements are accurate &word of god is accurate.

Reasons why you should not blame religion for the acts of some people Can u blame Christianity for the acts of crusades, holocaust,& because some priests rapes children inside the churches or because some Christian leaders dropped a nuclear bomb on japan. Or they did these horrible acts like these: George W. Bush Jr. - Christian, Turned Iraq war into a religious war by saying "god told him to invade Iraq", increase taxes on the middle class and poor, cut taxes for the rich.

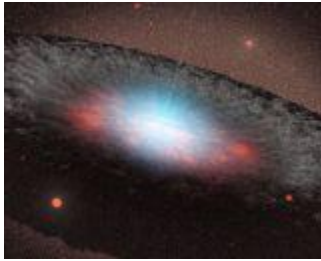
Nazism – Christians Adolph Hitler - Christian/Catholic Newt Gingrich – Christian Inquisitions - Christian Ugandan Christians Salem Witch burnings – Christian Waco Texas – Christian Jones Town - Christian San Diego Heaven's Gate – Christian Serbians – Christian Skin Heads – Christians IRA (Irish Republican Army) – Christian Iron Guard – Christian Westboro Baptist church – Christians Christian Tsarist Russia – Christian The Crusades - Christian & Catholic The Troubles - Catholic & Christian The Holocaust - Catholic & Christian The Book burnings - Catholic & Christian The heretic burnings – Christian Backing of the institution of slavery!!!!----

The answer is No no no and noooooo okay!!! its not the fault of Christianity but rather these are the faults of some bad people who did bad things & its as simple as that okay.Remember the good the bad the ugly exists in every thing or kind of people.Similarly blaming the religion islam for the acts of some few muslims who are evil terrorists is also wrong.Yes there are some bad bad bad people among muslims but again good people do good things & bad people do bad things.Im not denying or defending them because there are evil &good people among all religions & even atheists . It's as simple as that. 99% of muslims are not terrorists.&the bad muslims Or terrorists do not represent the true islam period. suppose some 1 has a very good expensive car or maybe it's the best car in the world.Now the owner starts driving the car

he starts drinking & he hits women children & starts killing innocent people. Now is this a fault of the car? No of course not it's the fault of the driver. Over here I'm representing the driver as a bad Muslim or you can say a terrorist & it's not the car's fault that the driver misused it so here the expensive good car is Islam. My point is don't blame Islam or Christianity or any other religion for the acts of some evil people. Remember the good the bad the ugly exists in every thing or kind of people. Islam is 1 of the most beautiful religion in the world but unfortunately it's blamed for the actions of few evil terrorists. & also be aware that there are many rumors, lies & false information & accusations that exist in the western world & some European countries against Islam & prophet Mohammad. Unfortunately some people believe in these false lies which has been spread by crusades, some media, some parts of governments & some bad rich anti Islam politicians to create misconceptions against Islam & prophet Mohammad only to stop spreading the truth about Islam.

Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he? [Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*, Paris 1854 Vol. II, pp. 276-77.] He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Popes pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports. [Bosworth Smith, *Mohammad and Mohammadanism*. London 1874, p. 92.] At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: If there are any among you who worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives forever. [James A. Michener, *Islam The Misunderstood Religion*] And for atheists in the history the world wars didn't cause by religion. And good people do good things & bad people do bad things. The good the bad the ugly is part of human nature.

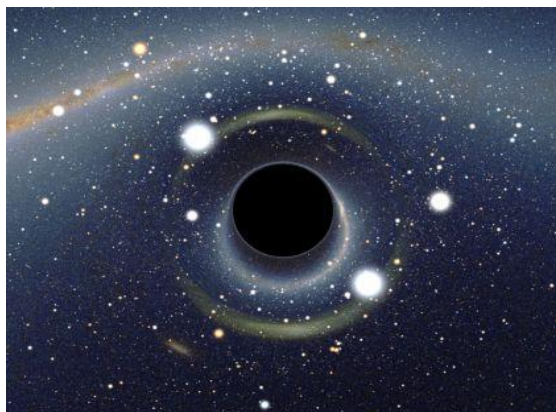
The Piercing Star and Black holes



The holy Quran is word of God. The Almighty revealed it to his final prophet to humanity. When prophets were inviting their people to the truth,

God endowed them with miracles to convince their people. Moses was given a miracle that excelled magic and dazzled magicians in ancient Egypt. Jesus was given a miracle that excelled medicine and he could cure people from incurable diseases. The only people who could see these miracles are the ones who were there. Because the prophet Muhammad was the final prophet his miracle had to be continuous and immortal, this immortal miracle is the holy Quran itself.

At the age of revealing the holy Quran Arabs were excelled in poetry and prose, so the holy Quran challenged them by its eloquence. Now miracles of the holy Quran appeared in the scientific signs mentioned in a lot of verses, these verses indicate to scientific facts which have been discovered since only few decades, So humanity must know that the holy Quran is the word of Allah. One of the scientific signs mentioned in the holy Quran is the piercing star. (1) The Almighty says in the beginning of surat Al-Tarek: (By the heaven and the Tarik (The Knocker) * Ah, what will tell thee what the Tarik (The knocker) is! * The piercing Star!) (Quran 86:1-3) These verses speak about a star which has two significant features. The first one is that it is a piercing star the other is that it knocks something hard enough to make sound. Allah (SWT) in these verses coupled His oath by heaven regarding its greatness with the piercing star which means that there is a relationship between both. The question now is How do these verses indicate to black holes? Black holes are the most violent and mysterious phenomenon in the sky. Black holes are the evolutionary endpoints of stars at least 10 to 15 times as massive as the Sun. If a star that massive or larger undergoes a supernova explosion, it may leave behind a fairly massive burned out stellar remnant. With no outward forces to oppose gravitational forces, the remnant will collapse in on itself. The star eventually collapses to the point of zero volume and infinite density, creating what is known as a "singularity". As the gravitational field is so powerful that nothing, including light, can escape its pull, the black hole has a one-way surface, called the event horizon, into which objects can fall, but out of which nothing can come out. At this we have to clarify very important point – which causes confusion to a lot of people- that we must distinguish between the event horizon of the black hole at which any matter or light can not escape and the point at which the matter of the exploded star is collapsed. If the sun become a black hole it will have an event horizon with radius about 3 km but all its matter will be condensed in a point at the center of the black hole. (General relativity describes a black hole as a region of empty space with a point like singularity at the center and an event horizon at the outer edge). (2)



The piercing star describes the matter of star condensed in singularity and the hole of empty space caused by this condensed matter.

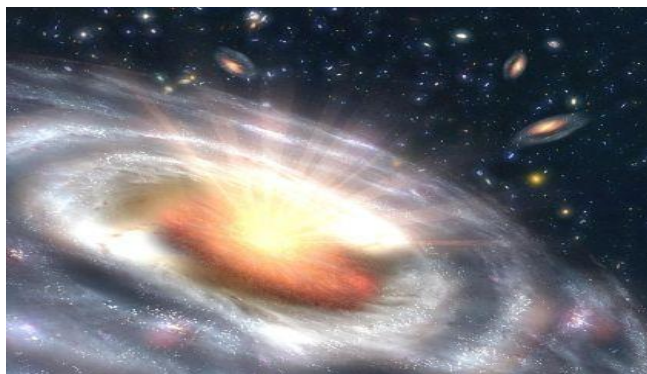
The verse indicates to the black hole The verse describes this phenomenon as the piercing star and this is more accurate description because the matter of the collapsed star which is condensed in singularity is the reason of forming the black hole. So the star itself still there condensed causing the existence of this empty space called black hole. When you describe this phenomenon as a black hole you actually are describing only the empty space but if

80 you describe it the piercing star, then you are describing the matter of star condensed in singularity and the hole of empty space caused by this matter.

Types of black holes There are two main types of black holes the first one is the stellar black holes and the second is actually the biggest and greatest phenomenon in the sky, it is the supermassive black holes. This confirms to us why the oath of the piercing star in the holy Quran is great enough to be coupled with the oath of heaven regarding its greatness.

The properties of supermassive black holes The most significant feature of the supermassive black hole is its mass which exceed all limits of imagination if you know that the mass of stellar black holes can reach 30 times solar mass, the mass of a supermassive black hole can reach ten billion times solar mass. It is formed also as result of collapse of the matter of supermassive star at the beginning of formation of galaxies, so the piercing star which is condensed in a tiny volume causing this supermassive black hole is considered to be the most massive star in the universe. (3)

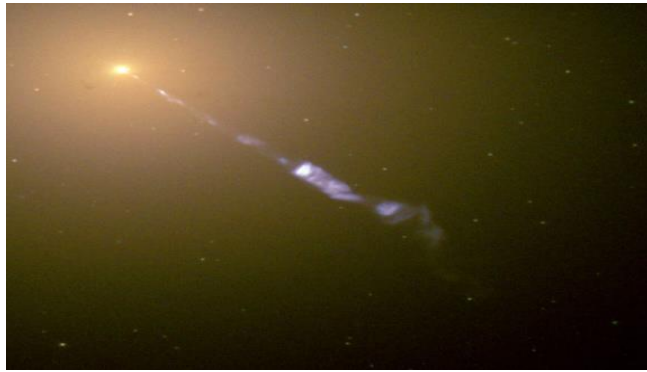
The story begins with Quasars It has got along time for scientists to discover the supermassive black holes and the beginning was the discovery of quasars. The QUASi-stellar radio source (quasar) is a powerfully energetic and distant active galactic nucleus. The most luminous quasars radiate at a rate that can exceed the output of average galaxies, equivalent to one trillion (10¹²) suns. Scientist for along time have wondered how does a quasar produce such tremendous luminosity despite its distance from us which reaches billions of light years and the answer came from the most violent thing in sky it is the supermassive black hole. The huge luminosity of quasars results from the accretion discs of central supermassive black holes, which can convert on the order of 10% of the mass of an object into energy as compared to 0.7% for the p-p chain nuclear fusion process that dominates the energy production in sun-like stars. (4)



The huge luminosity of quasars results from the accretion discs of central supermassive black holes

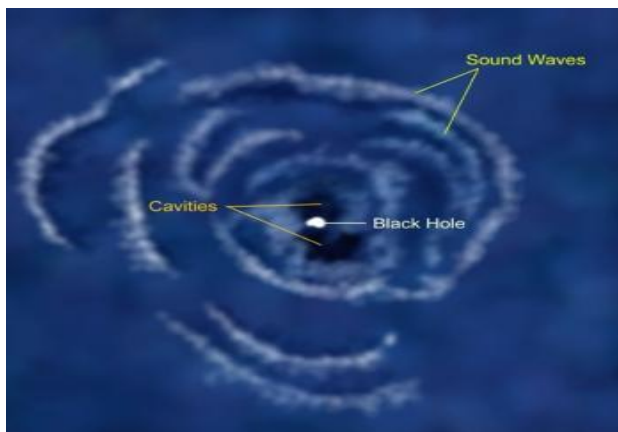
The cosmic knocks resulted from supermassive black holes The mentioned verses (By the heaven and the Tarik (The Knocker) * Ah, what will tell thee what the Tarik (The knocker) is! * The piercing Star!) (Quran 86:1-3) stated that the piercing star which we explained its relation to supermassive black hole has another significant feature as the verses called it Al-Tarik (The knocker) so how does the piercing star and the resulted supermassive black hole knock? Part of the matter of accretion disk rotating supermassive black hole which is

81 about to fall in the supermassive black hole is re-emitted as Relativistic jets which are extremely powerful twin jets of plasma being shot along the axis of spin of the accretion disk having a velocity approaching the speed of light. This jet knocks hardly and strongly any thing in its way and for long distances. And due to the movement of this plasma jet it knocks the interstellar and the intergalactic medium producing real sound waves.



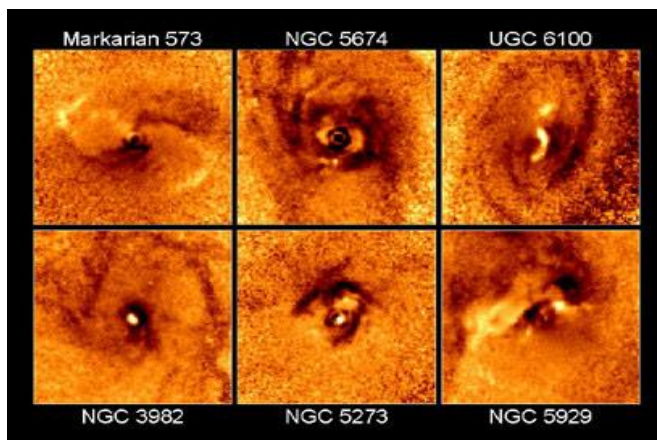
A real jet of plasma produced by a supermassive black hole in the galaxy (M87) recorded by Hubel space telescope. It knocks every thing in its way for a distance (5000 light years).

In Sept. 9, 2003: Astronomers using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory have found, for the first time, sound waves from a supermassive black hole. This supermassive black hole resides in the Perseus cluster of galaxies located 250 million light years from Earth. The "note" is the deepest ever detected from any object in our Universe. (5)



Real sound waves resulted from jets knocking the intergalactic medium. Now imagine how great the miracle in the verses is. The piercing star and the resulted supermassive black hole knocks the intergalactic medium with relativistic jets and as result of this knocking real sound is produced. (By the heaven and the Tarik (The Knocker) * Ah, what will tell thee what the Tarik (The knocker) is! * The piercing Star!) (Quran 86:1-3) *The piercing star and heaven* Allah (SWT) in these verses coupled His oath by heaven regarding its greatness with the piercing star which means that there is a fundamental relationship between this type of stars and all what we see in the sky from stars and galaxies.

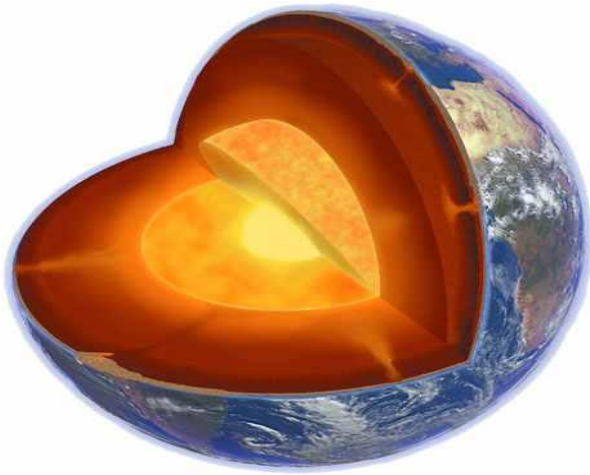
The piercing star is in the core of all galaxies Quasar and related supermassive black holes have been associated to a type of galaxies called active galaxies, but the other type of galaxies called inactive galaxies which includes our galaxy the Milky way are thought for a long time to have no supermassive black holes in their cores, but from about two decades scientists have found a method to determine the existence of supermassive black hole by determining the velocities of stars close to the galactic nuclei and they were surprised when they found a supermassive black hole in all galaxies. What remained is to know is there a supermassive black hole in our galaxy the Milky way or not. In 2003 American astrophysicist Andrea Ghez and its teamwork (UCLA) and by using high spatial resolution imaging techniques have confirmed the existence of a supermassive black hole in our own galaxy. (6)The image is now complete each galaxy has its own supermassive black hole, but why there are active galaxies and inactive ones. The answer of this question related to the development of galaxies.



There is a supermassive black hole in each galaxy *Supermassive black hole and the birth of galaxies* Scientists have found a relationship between the velocity of stars at the edges of galaxies and the mass of the supermassive black holes in the core of these galaxies and because the distance between them are very large so this relation formed in a previous time, the time of galaxy birth as it thought that the galaxies are formed when a huge cloud of gas is collapsed at its core forming supermassive black hole which start to feed on the neighboring gas forming a quasar. This quasar triggers the formation of new stars in the entire galaxy so a new active galaxy is formed, but with time the gas start to get far from the supermassive black hole so it has nothing to feed on and the active galaxy converts to inactive one.

So science today makes a relation between the piercing star and all what we see in the sky from stars and galaxies. For this reason Allah (SWT) in these verses coupled His oath by heaven regarding its greatness with the piercing star which means that there is a fundamental relationship between this type of stars and all what we see in the sky from stars and galaxies. (By the heaven and the Tarik (The Knocker) * Ah, what will tell thee what the Tarik (The knocker) is! * The piercing Star!) (Quran 86:1-3)

References

(2) http://www.physics.hku.hk/~nature/CD/regular_e/lectures/chap17.html(3) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supermassive_black_hole(4) http://imagine.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/science/known/active_galaxies.html(5) http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2003/09sep_blackholesounds.htm(6) <http://www.astro.ucla.edu/~ghezgroup/gc/index.shtml>Universe By: Chem. Gamal Abdel-Nasser**THE 7 EARTHS**

The Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad is the second revealed source of Islam. Like the Quran, it contains scientific information unavailable 1400 years ago. From these miracles is the “seven” earths, mentioned by the Prophet in several of his sayings. From them are the following two: Hadith 1 It was narrated on the authority of Abu Salamah that a dispute arose between him and some other people (about a piece of land). When he told Aisha (the Prophet’s wife) about it, she said, ‘O Abu Salamah! Avoid taking the land unjustly, for the Prophet said: “Whoever usurps even one span of land of somebody, its depth through the seven earths will be collared to his neck.”’ (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, ‘Book of Oppression.’)

Hadith 2 Salim narrated on the authority of his father that the Prophet said: “Whoever takes a piece of land of others unjustly, he will sink down the seven earths on the Day of Resurrection.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, ‘Book of Oppression.’) The aforementioned hadith prohibits oppression in general, especially the taking of a piece of land belonging to others unjustly. What might the seven earths refer to? Studies in geology have proven that the earth is composed of seven zones, identified from the inner to the outer layers as follows:

(1) The Solid Inner Core of Earth: 1.7% of the Earth’s mass; depth of 5,150 - 6,370 kilometers (3,219 - 3,981 miles) The inner core is solid and unattached to the mantle, suspended in the molten outer core. It is believed to have solidified as a result of pressure-freezing which occurs to most liquids when temperature decreases or pressure increases.

(2) The Liquid Outer core: 30.8% of Earth's mass; depth of 2,890 - 5,150 kilometers (1,806 - 3,219 miles)

The outer core is a hot, electrically conducting liquid within which convective motion occurs. This conductive layer combines with Earth's rotation to create a dynamo effect that maintains a system of electrical currents known as the Earth's magnetic field. It is also responsible for the subtle jerking of Earth's rotation. This layer is not as dense as pure molten iron, which indicates the presence of lighter elements. Scientists suspect that about 10% of the layer is composed of sulfur and/or oxygen because these elements are abundant in the cosmos and dissolve readily in molten iron.

(3) The "D" Layer: 3% of Earth's mass; depth of 2,700 - 2,890 kilometers (1,688 - 1,806 miles) This layer is 200 to 300 kilometers (125 to 188 miles) thick and represents about 4% of the mantle-crust mass. Although it is often identified as part of the lower mantle, seismic discontinuities suggest the "D" layer might differ chemically from the lower mantle lying above it. Scientists theorize that the material either dissolved in the core, or was able to sink through the mantle but not into the core because of its density.

(4) Lower Mantle: 49.2% of Earth's mass; depth of 650 - 2,890 kilometers (406 - 1,806 miles)

The lower mantle contains 72.9% of the mantle-crust mass and is probably composed mainly of silicon, magnesium, and oxygen. It probably also contains some iron, calcium, and aluminum. Scientists make these deductions by assuming the Earth has a similar abundance and proportion of cosmic elements as found in the Sun and primitive meteorites.

(5) Middle Mantle (Transition region): 7.5% of Earth's mass; depth of 400 - 650 kilometers (250-406 miles)

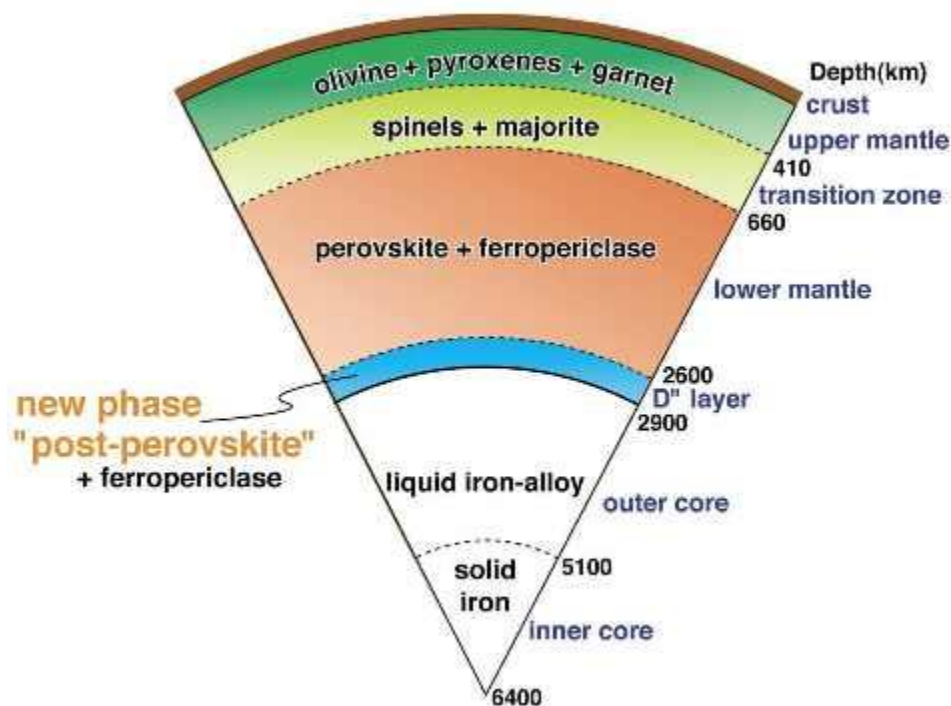
The transition region or mesosphere (for middle mantle), sometimes called the fertile layer, contains 11.1% of the mantle-crust mass and is the source of basaltic magmas. It also contains calcium, aluminum, and garnet, which is a complex aluminum-bearing silicate mineral. This layer is dense when cold because of the garnet. It is buoyant when hot because these minerals melt easily to form basalt which can then rise through the upper layers as magma.

(6) Upper Mantle: 10.3% of Earth's mass; depth of 10 - 400 kilometers (6 - 250 miles)

The upper mantle contains 15.3% of the mantle-crust mass. Fragments have been excavated for our observation by eroded mountain belts and volcanic eruptions. Olivine $(\text{Mg,Fe})_2\text{SiO}_4$ and pyroxene $(\text{Mg,Fe})\text{SiO}_3$ have been the primary minerals found in this way. These and other minerals are refractory and crystalline at high temperatures; therefore, most settle out of rising magma, either forming new material or never leaving the mantle. Part of the upper mantle called the asthenosphere might be partially molten.

85 (7) **Lithosphere** Oceanic crust: 0.099% of Earth's mass; depth of 0-10 kilometers (0 - 6 miles) The rigid, outermost layer of the Earth comprising the crust and upper mantle is called the lithosphere. The oceanic crust contains 0.147% of the mantle-crust mass. The majority of the Earth's crust was made through volcanic activity. The oceanic ridge system, a 40,000-kilometer (25,000 mile) network of volcanoes, generates new oceanic crust at the rate of 17 km³ per year, covering the ocean floor with basalt. Hawaii and Iceland are two examples of the accumulation of basalt piles.

The continental crust contains 0.554% of the mantle-crust mass. This is the outer part of the Earth composed essentially of crystalline rocks. These are low-density buoyant minerals dominated mostly by quartz (SiO₂) and feldspars (metal-poor silicates). The crust (both oceanic and continental) is the surface of the Earth; as such, it is the coldest part of our planet. Because cold rocks deform slowly, we refer to this rigid outer shell as the lithosphere (the rocky or strong layer).



Conclusion

The layers of the earth coincide with the above mentioned hadith of the Prophet. The miracle is in two matters:

- (1) The expression of the hadith, 'He will sink down the seven earths on the Day of Resurrection,' indicates the stratification of these "earths" around one center.
- (2) The accuracy with which the Prophet of Islam referred to the seven inner layers of earth. The only way for a desert dweller to have known these facts 1400 years ago is through revelation from God.

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Some hadiths (teachings of prophet Muhammad)(pbuh) Aisha reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, say, **“Gabriel continued to advise me to treat neighbors well until I thought he would make them my heirs.”**Source: Sahih Muslim 2624 Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Imam Muslim

Abu Musa reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “The honest Muslim trustee who carries out the orders of those who trusted him and who pays in full with a good heart to the right person is regarded as one of the two who gave charity.” Source: Sahih Bukhari 1371, Sahih Muslim [...] Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“There is no justification for envy except in two cases. First, a man whom Allah has given the Quran and he recites it during the night and day, so someone says: If I were to be given like this, I would do as he is doing. And second, a man whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in justice, so someone says: If I were to be given like this, I would do as he is doing.”** Source: Sahih Bukhari 6805 Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Al-Bukhari

Hadith on Zakat: The command to give 2.5% of surplus wealth as alms and charity

Abu Amina Elias | April 5, 2013 Ali ibn Abu Talib reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“If you have two hundred coins and a year has passed, then five coins is due for alms; and you will owe nothing until you own twenty coins, but when you own twenty coins and a year has passed, then half of a coin is due for alms and whatever exceeds that should be calculated likewise.”**Source: Sunan Abu Dawud 1572 Grade: *Hasan* (fair) according to Abu Dawud (due to his silence) Abu Dharr reported: My dear friend the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, enjoined upon me three deeds, **“Listen to and obey the ruler even if a slave is appointed over you. When you make soup, put some extra water in it and look to the people in the neighboring house and give them a reasonable portion of it, and pray your prayers on time, for if you find the Imam praying then pray with him and your prayer will be safeguarded, otherwise it will be voluntary for you.”**Source: Musnad Ahmad 20918 Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Al-Albani

Juwairiya reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, came out from her apartment as she was performing the dawn prayer. He returned in the forenoon and found her sitting there. The Prophet said, **“Are you in the same position as I left you?”** She said yes. The Prophet said, **“I recited four words three times after I left you. If these are to be weighed against all you have recited since the morning, these words will be heavier. They are: Glory and praise to Allah as many as the numbers of His creation, in according with His pleasure, as the weight of the Throne, and as the ink for recording His words.”**Source: Sahih Muslim 2726 Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Imam Muslim

Ubadah ibn As-Samit reported: We pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, pledging to listen and obey in hardship and in ease, in pleasure and displeasure even if someone is wrongly favored over us, and pledging not to dispute the rule of

those in authority and that we should speak the truth wherever we are and not to fear those who blame us regarding Allah. Source: Sahih Muslim 1709 Grade: **Sahih** (authentic) according to Imam Muslim

Al-Qurtubi reported: Some scholars gave permission to initiate greetings of peace with the unbelievers. It was said to Sufyan bin Uyainah, "Do you give permission to greet an unbeliever with peace?" Sufyan said, "Yes, for Allah the Exalted said: **Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you in religion nor expel you from your homes that you be righteous and fair to them. Verily, Allah loves those who are just.**" (60:8) Sufyan added, "Allah said: **There has come to you the best example in Abraham,** (60:4) and Abraham said to his father: **Peace be upon you.**" (19:47) Source: Tafseer Al-Qurtubi, verse 19:41

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported: He stood upon a platform and he grabbed his tongue and he said, "O tongue! Speak goodness and be rewarded, or remain silent and be safe before you are regretful." Then he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, say, "**Most of the sins of the children of Adam are on their tongues.**" [At-Tabarani, Mu'jam Al-Kabeer, Number 10300, **Sahih**]

Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said three times, "**May Allah have mercy on a person who spoke rightly and was rewarded, or who was silent and remained safe.**" Source: Shu'b Al-Iman Al-Bayhaqi 4579

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "**The basis of reasoning, after faith in Allah, is loving kindness toward the people.**" Source: At-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat, Number 6067

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "**Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him not harm his neighbor. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his guest. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak goodness or remain silent.**" Source: Sahih Muslim 47

Ibn Mas'ud reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "**During the night journey, I met with Abraham, Moses, and Jesus and they were discussing the matter of the Hour. Their matter was referred to Abraham, who said, 'I have no knowledge about it.' So the matter was referred to Moses, who said, 'I have no knowledge about it.' So the matter was referred to Jesus, who said, 'As for the conditions of the Hour, no one knows them but Allah. My Lord the Exalted has entrusted me that the False Messiah will appear and I will have with me two rods. When he sees me, he will melt away just as lead is melted in fire. Allah will destroy him to the point that the rock and the tree will say: O Muslims, beneath me is an unbeliever, so come slay him. Thus, Allah will destroy them and the people will return to their lands and their countries. When that happens, the nations of Gog and Magog will appear, eating and drinking everything in their lands. They will not come upon anything but that they will devour it and they will not pass by any water but that they will consume it. The people will complain to me about them, so I will supplicate to Allah and He will destroy them until their stench fills the earth. Then Allah will send rain which will wash their bodies into the sea. My Lord the Exalted has entrusted me that when all of this happens, the Hour is indeed near just as a woman is ready to give birth; her family does not know when she will give birth but it could be any day or night.**" [Musnad Ahmad, Number 3546, **Sahih**]

88 Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“By Allah, the son of Mary will descend as a just ruler. He will abolish the cross, kill the swine, and annul the tribute, but he will leave the she-camel such that no one collects from it. He will cause rancor, hatred, and envy to disappear, and he will call people to give their wealth in charity but no one will need it.”**Source: Sahih Muslim 155

Prophet said, “By Allah, you must enjoin good and forbid evil and seize the hand of the oppressor and make him follow the truth and restrict him to what is just.”Source: Sunan Abu Dawud 4336

"God is Kind and likes kindness in all things."Reporter: Hadhrat Ayesah (r) Source: Bukhari/Muslim (reported in Riyadhus Saleheen,#633); Sunan Ibn Majah, #3684
The people will be resurrected (and judged) according to their intentions."Reporter: Hadhrat Aishah (r) Source: Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 3, Book of Fasting, Chapter 6, p. 69

"The best among you are those who have the best manners and character."Reporter: Hadhrat Abdullah ibn Amr (r) Source: Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 8: #56b

"A person who goes in search of knowledge, he is in the path of God and he remains so till he returns."Reporter: Hadhrat Anas (r) Source: Sunan at-Tirmizi, Vol. 4, #2656

"Hell lies hidden behind evil (worldly desires) and paradise is screened behind hard labor."Reporter: Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (r) Source: Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, #494

"Paradise is closer to you than your shoelace, and so is the (Hell) Fire."Reporter: Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud Source: Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, #495

"The world is prison for the believers and paradise for the disbelievers."Reporter: Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (r) Source: Sahih Muslim, Vol. 4, #7058

"To spend one morning or evening in the cause of God is better than the world and whatever is in the world."Reporter: Hadhrat Anas bin Malik Source: Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, #50

PROVING THE EXISTENCE OF ALLAH (SWT) TO AN ATHEIST

by Dr. Zakir Naik

CONGRATULATING AN ATHEIST

Normally, when I meet an atheist, the first thing I like to do is to congratulate him and say, " My special congratulations to you", because most of the people who believe in God are doing blind belief - he is a Christian, because his father is a Christian; he is a Hindu, because his father is a Hindu; the majority of the people in the world are blindly following the religion of their fathers. An atheist, on the other hand, even though he may belong to a religious family, uses his intellect to deny the existence of God; what ever concept or qualities of God he may have learnt in his religion may not seem to be logical to him.



My Muslim brothers may question me, "Zakir, why are you congratulating an atheist?" The reason that I am congratulating an atheist is because he agrees with the first part of the Shahada i.e. the Islamic Creed, 'La ilaaha' - meaning 'there is no God'.

So half my job is already done; now the only part left is 'il lallah' i.e. 'BUT ALLAH' which I shall do Insha Allah. With others (who are not atheists) I have to first remove from their minds the wrong concept of God they may have and then put the correct concept of one true God.

LOGICAL CONCEPT OF GOD

My first question to the atheist will be: "What is the definition of God?" For a person to say there is no God, he should know what is the meaning of God. If I hold a book and say that 'this is a pen', for the opposite person to say, 'it is not a pen', he should know what is the definition of a pen, even if he does not know nor is able to recognise or identify the object I am holding in my hand. For him to say this is not a pen, he should at least know what a pen means. Similarly for an atheist to say 'there is no God', he should at least know the concept of God. His concept of God would be derived from the surroundings in which he lives. The god that a large number of people worship has got human qualities - therefore he does not believe in such a god. Similarly a Muslim too does not and should not believe in such false gods.

If a non-Muslim believes that Islam is a merciless religion with something to do with terrorism; a religion which does not give rights to women; a religion which contradicts science; in his limited sense that non-Muslim is correct to reject such Islam. The problem is he has a wrong picture of Islam. Even I reject such a false picture of Islam, but at the same time, it becomes my duty as a Muslim to present the correct picture of Islam to that non-Muslim i.e. Islam is a merciful religion, it gives equal rights to the women, it is not incompatible with logic, reason and science; if I present the correct facts about Islam, that non-Muslim may Inshallah accept Islam.

Similarly the atheist rejects the false gods and the duty of every Muslim is to present the correct concept of God which he shall Insha Allah not refuse.

(You may refer to my article, 'Concept of God in Islam', for more details)

QUR'AN AND MODERN SCIENCE

The methods of proving the existence of God with usage of the material provided in the 'Concept of God in Islam' to an atheist may satisfy some but not all.

Many atheists demand a scientific proof for the existence of God. I agree that today is the age of science and technology. Let us use scientific knowledge to kill two birds with one stone, i.e. to prove the existence of God and simultaneously prove that the Qur'an is a revelation of God.

If a new object or a machine, which no one in the world has ever seen or heard of before, is shown to an atheist or any person and then a question is asked, "Who is the first person who will be able to provide details of the mechanism of this unknown object? After little bit of thinking, he will reply, 'the creator of that object.' Some may say 'the producer' while others may say 'the manufacturer.' What ever answer the person gives, keep it in your mind, the answer will always be either the creator, the producer, the manufacturer or some what of the same meaning, i.e. the person who has made it or created it. Don't grapple with words, whatever answer he gives, the meaning will be same, therefore accept it.

SCIENTIFIC FACTS MENTIONED IN THE QUR'AN: for details on this subject please refer to my book, 'THE QUR'AN AND MODERN SCIENCE – COMPATIBLE OR INCOMPATIBLE?'

THEORY OF PROBABILITY

In mathematics there is a theory known as 'Theory of Probability'. If you have two options, out of which one is right, and one is wrong, the chances that you will chose the right one is half, i.e. one out of the two will be correct. You have 50% chances of being correct. Similarly if you toss a coin the chances that your guess will be correct is 50% (1 out of 2) i.e. $1/2$. If you toss a coin the second time, the chances that you will be correct in the second toss is again 50% i.e. half. But the chances that you will be correct in both the tosses is half multiplied by half ($1/2 \times 1/2$) which is equal to $1/4$ i.e. 50% of 50% which is equal to 25%. If you toss a coin the third time, chances that you will be correct all three times is ($1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2$) that is $1/8$ or 50% of 50% of 50% that is $12\frac{1}{2}\%$.

A dice has got six sides. If you throw a dice and guess any number between 1 to 6, the chances that your guess will be correct is $1/6$. If you throw the dice the second time, the chances that your guess will be correct in both the throws is ($1/6 \times 1/6$) which is equal to $1/36$. If you throw the dice the third time, the chances that all your three guesses are correct is ($1/6 \times 1/6 \times 1/6$) is equal to $1/216$ that is less than 0.5 %.

Let us apply this theory of probability to the Qur'an, and assume that a person has guessed all the information that is mentioned in the Qur'an which was unknown at that time. Let us discuss the probability of all the guesses being simultaneously correct.

At the time when the Qur'an was revealed, people thought the world was flat, there are several other options for the shape of the earth. It could be triangular, it could be quadrangular, pentagonal, hexagonal, heptagonal, octagonal, spherical, etc. Lets assume there are about 30 different options for the shape of the earth. The Qur'an rightly says it is spherical, if it was a guess the chances of the guess being correct is $1/30$.

The light of the moon can be its own light or a reflected light. The Qur'an rightly says it is a reflected light. If it is a guess, the chances that it will be correct is $1/2$ and the probability that both the guesses i.e. the earth is spherical and the light of the moon is reflected light is $1/30 \times 1/2 = 1/60$.

Further, the Qur'an also mentions every living thing is made of water. Every living thing can be made up of either wood, stone, copper, aluminum, steel, silver, gold, oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, oil, water, cement, concrete, etc. The options are say about 10,000. The Qur'an rightly says that everything is made up of water. If it is a guess, the chances that it will be correct is $1/10,000$ and the probability of all the three guesses i.e. the earth is spherical, light of moon is reflected light and everything is created from water being correct is $1/30 \times 1/2 \times 1/10,000 = 1/60,000$ which is equal to about .0017%.

The Qur'an speaks about hundreds of things that were not known to men at the time of its revelation. Only in three options the result is .0017%. I leave it upto you, to work out the probability if all the hundreds of the unknown facts were guesses, the chances of all of them being correct guesses simultaneously and there being not a single wrong guess. It is beyond human capacity to make all correct guesses without a single mistake, which itself is sufficient to prove to a logical person that the origin of the Qur'an is Divine.

CREATOR IS THE AUTHOR OF THE QUR'AN

The only logical answer to the question as to who could have mentioned all these scientific facts 1400 years ago before they were discovered, is exactly the same answer initially given by the atheist or any person, to the question who will be the first person who will be able to tell the mechanism of the unknown object. It is the 'CREATOR', the producer, the Manufacturer of the whole universe and its contents. In the English language He is 'God', or more appropriate in the Arabic language, 'ALLAH'.

QUR'AN IS A BOOK OF SIGNS AND NOT SCIENCE

Let me remind you that the Qur'an is not a book of Science, 'S-C-I-E-N-C-E' but a book of Signs 'S-I-G-N-S' i.e. a book of ayaats. The Qur'an contains more than 6,000 ayaats, i.e. 'signs', out of which more than a thousand speak about Science. I am not trying to prove that the Qur'an is the word of God using scientific knowledge as a yard stick because any yardstick is supposed to be more superior than what is being checked or verified. For us Muslims the Qur'an is the Furqan i.e. criteria to judge right from wrong and the ultimate yardstick which is more superior to scientific knowledge.

But for an educated man who is an atheist, scientific knowledge is the ultimate test which he believes in. We do know that science many a times takes 'U' turns, therefore I have restricted the examples only to

scientific facts which have sufficient proof and evidence and not scientific theories based on assumptions. Using the ultimate yardstick of the atheist, I am trying to prove to him that the Qur'an is the word of God and it contains the scientific knowledge which is his yardstick which was discovered recently, while the Qur'an was revealed 1400 year ago. At the end of the discussion, we both come to the same conclusion that God though superior to science, is not incompatible with it.

SCIENCE IS ELIMINATING MODELS OF GOD BUT NOT GOD

Francis Bacon, the famous philosopher, has rightly said that a little knowledge of science makes man an atheist, but an in-depth study of science makes him a believer in God. Scientists today are eliminating models of God, but they are not eliminating God. If you translate this into Arabic, it is La illaha illal la, There is no god, (god with a small 'g' that is fake god) but God (with a capital 'G').

Surah Fussilat:

"Soon We will show them our signs in the (farthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?"

[Al-Quran 41:53]

Apostates: Should they be killed or saved? 1- Who are the Apostates in Islam?

Apostates or Renegades are those who decide to leave the religion of Islam. There is a widely prevailing misconception about this issue. It is generally thought that the Holy Quran (The Muslims Holy Scripture) provides the death sentence for those who desert the religion of Islam. There is not the least ground for such a supposition. The Holy Quran speaks repeatedly of people going back to unbelief after believing, but never once does it say that they should be killed or punished. Although the Holy Quran does provide the death sentence for some situations such as putting a murderer to death, but it never provided death sentence or ordered the death of those who leave Islam. Let us look at Noble Verse 2:217 "They ask thee (Mohammed) Concerning fighting In the Prohibited Month. Say: Fighting therein Is a grave (offence); but graver is it In the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the sacred Mosque, and drive out its members. Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can. And if any of you **turn back** from their faith (Islam) and die in unbelief, their works will bear no fruit in this life and in the hereafter; they will be companions of the fire and will abide therein." Here in this Holy Verse we see that Allah Almighty talks about those who leave Islam, and promises them punishment in the day of judgment. Allah Almighty doesn't order the death of those people. Let also look at Noble Verse 5:54 "O ye who believe! If any from among you **turn back from his faith**, soon will Allah produce a people whom He (Allah) will love as they will love Him lowly with the believers, Mighty against the rejecters, fighting in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproachers of such as find fault. That is the Grace of Allah which He will bestow on whom He (Allah) pleaseth. And Allah encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things." Here in this Holy Verse we see again Allah Almighty strengthening the faith of the Muslims in Islam by assuring them that whenever they see Muslims leaving Islam they will also see those who join Islam with strong faith and love to Allah Almighty. "As most men are

rebellious." (5:49), it is inevitable that there should be apostates even from such a religion of reason and common-sense as Islam. In Verse 5:54 above there is a warning to the Muslims that

93 they should not repeat the history of the Jews, and become so self-satisfied or arrogant as to depart from the spirit of Allah's teaching. If they do, the loss will be their own. Allah's bounty is not confined to one group or section of humanity. He can always raise up people who will follow the true spirit of Islam. That spirit is defined in two ways:

1- They will love Allah Almighty and Allah Almighty will love them.

2- Amongst the Brethren, their attitude will be that of humility, but to wrongdoers they will offer no compromises, and they will always strive and fight for the truth and right. They will know no fear, either physical, or that more insidious form. They are too great in mind to be haunted by any such thought. Let us look at Noble Verse 5:55 "(O Muslims) Your (real) friends are (No less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (Fellowship Of) Believers, those who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship)." Here we see

Allah Almighty telling Muslims after he warned them from apostates in (5:54) that their real friends are: Allah Almighty, Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him, and the good Muslims who keep up with their prayers and charity, and who humbly worship their God.

Let us look at Noble Verse 3:90 "**But those who reject faith after they accepted it**, and then go on adding to their defiance of faith never will their repentance be accepted; for they are those who have (of set purpose) gone astray." Here in this holy verse we see Allah Almighty rejecting the faith of those who keep coming back and forth to Islam. In order for a human being to accept Islam as his religion, he must be certain about it first. Allah Almighty's path is wide open, and his mercy is greater than this universe. This Holy Verse also does not order the death of those who leave Islam. The path to Allah Almighty is always open and Allah Almighty will be your friend as in verse (5:55) above, and he will forgive your sins for you once you repent as in the following verse: "Except for those that repent (Even) after that, And make amends; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful." (3:89).

2- The absolute freedom of religion in Islam: Some group of Muslims believe in killing apostates because they follow a Hadith (Saying) from Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him regarding the apostates. While Islam was weak and still growing among Jews, Christians and Pagans, Muslims did not have the full and complete religion that they needed. Some Jews and Christians wanted to take advantage of such situation to destroy Islam. They had a plan to adopt Islam first and then desert it, thus creating the impression that Islam was not a religion worth adopting. Let us look at Noble Verse 3:72 "A section of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) say: Believe in the morning what is revealed to the believers (Muslims), but reject it at the end of the day; perchance they may (themselves) turn back (from Islam)." To protect Islam from such Satanic attempts done by a group of the people of the book (Jews and Christians), Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him ordered the death of those who enter Islam and leave it. This temporary law that was put by our Prophet had stopped the hypocrites from the People of the Book who carried so much hatred toward Islam to enter Islam and desert it afterwards. Allah Almighty ordered the Muslims to kill the pagans who fought against the Muslims. The

following Noble Verse talks about all of the enemies who fought the Muslims long and bloody battles: Let us look at Noble Verse 2:191 "And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have Turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith." The killing of the pagans who fought the Muslims during the time when Islam was not yet complete was essential.

Important Note: Noble Verse 2:191 above is not dedicated to the apostates as some Muslims use it to prove that the Noble Quran orders the killing of apostates. In fact, it doesn't even mention the apostates. It talks in general about slaying the pagans who declare wars on the Muslims. The pagans would obviously include the apostates who deserted Islam, but the Noble Verse certainly doesn't DIRECTLY order the killing of anyone who deserts Islam. Allah Almighty promised that He will protect the Noble Quran from any corruption:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption). (The Noble Quran, 15:9)" "Nay, this is a Glorious Quran, (inscribed) in a Tablet Preserved! (The Noble Quran, 85:21-22)"

Let us look at Noble Verse 5:3 ".....This day those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion: Yet fear them not But fear Me (Allah). **This day have I (Allah) perfected your religion for you**, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your (complete) religion....". So long as Islam was not organized, with its own community and its own laws, the unbelievers and the Hypocrites from the People of the Book and the Pagan Arabs had hoped to wean the believers from the new teaching. Now that hope is gone forever with the complete organization of Islam. Let us look at Noble Verses 15:2-3 "Again and again will those who disbelieve, wish that they had bowed (to God's will) in Islam. **Leave them alone**, to enjoy (the good things of this life) and to please themselves: let (false) hope amuse them: soon will knowledge (undeceive them)." Let us look at Noble Verses 10:99-100 "If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed, all who are on earth! wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe! **No soul can believe, except by the will of God**, and He will place doubt (or obscurity) on those who will not understand." Let us look at Noble Verse 18:29 "Say, 'The truth is from your Lord': **Let him who will believe, and let him who will, reject (it)**: for the wrong doers We have prepared a Fire whose (smoke and flames), like the walls and roof of a tent, will hem them in: if they implore relief they will be granted water like melted brass, that will scald their faces, how dreadful the drink! How uncomfortable a couch to recline on!"

Let us look at Noble Verse 27:92 "And to rehearse the Qur'an: and if any accept guidance, they do it for the good of their own souls, and if any stray, say: '**I am only a Warner.**'" Let us look at Noble Verse 10:99 "If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed,- all who are on earth! **wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!**" Allah Almighty doesn't like us to compel people into belief. "**No soul can believe, except by the will of God**, and He will place doubt (or obscurity) on those who will not understand. (The Noble Quran, 10:100)" Allah Almighty helps those whom He likes to be guided to His Straight Path. If anyone doesn't believe, or reverts back from Islam, it is then his loss and it is the Will of Allah Almighty. "Say: 'Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth'; but neither Signs nor Warners

95 profit those who believe not. Do they then expect (any thing) but (what happened in) the days of the men who passed away before them? **Say: 'Wait ye then: for I, too, will wait with you.'** (The Noble Quran, 10:101-102)" Notice how Allah Almighty orders us to say "Wait" to those who reject Islam. This clearly says that we can't force anyone into Islam, or punish anyone for leaving Islam.

Let us look at Noble Verse 10:108 "Say: 'O ye men! Now Truth hath reached you from your Lord! those who receive guidance, do so for the good of their own souls; those who stray, do so to their own loss: **and I am not (set) over you to arrange your affairs.**'" Whoever believes benefits his soul and whoever doesn't, harms it, and Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him is not in charge of people to arrange their affairs. Only Allah Almighty is. "Say: 'Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger: but if ye turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him and ye for that placed on you. If ye obey him, ye shall be on right guidance. **The Messenger's duty is only to preach the clear (Message).**' (The Noble Quran, 24:54)" Prophet Muhammad's duty was only to preach.

"Those who pervert the Truth in Our Signs are not hidden from Us. Which is better? he that is cast into the Fire, or he that comes safe through, on the Day of Judgement? **Do what ye will:** Verily He seeth (clearly) all that ye do. (The Noble Quran, 41:40)" Here we clearly see Allah Almighty giving a freedom of choice for people to choose or refuse Islam.

"And those who take as protectors others besides Him - Allah doth watch over them; and **thou art not the disposer of their affairs.** (The Noble Quran, 42:6)" Again, Allah Almighty here told Prophet Muhammad that he has no authority over those who reject Islam.

"It is true thou wilt not be able to guide every one whom thou lovest; **but Allah Guides those whom He will and He Knows those who receive guidance.** (The Noble Quran, 28:56)" Again, no authority to Prophet Muhammad over those who accept or reject Islam.

Let us look at Noble Verse 2:256 "**Let there be no compulsion in religion:** Truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things." The Holy Quran prohibits Muslims to force any person into Islam. Muslims must not let people resent Islam and Muslims. They must leave people decide for themselves because the "Truth stands out clear from error" (2:256).

Compulsion is incompatible with religion: Because (1) religion depends upon faith and will, and these would be meaningless by force; (2) Truth and Error have been so clearly shown up by the mercy of Allah Almighty that there should be no doubt in the minds of any persons of good will as to the fundamentals of faith; (3) Allah Almighty's protection is continuous, and His Plan is always to lead us from the depths of darkness into the clearest light.

The following was sent to me from "Vipor Poison"; may Allah Almighty always be pleased with him:

"I found another verse in the Quran that dealt with apostates. Noble Verse 4:137 "Those who believe, then reject faith, then believe (again) and (again) reject faith, and go on increasing in unbelief,- Allah will not forgive them nor guide them nor guide them on the way." Notice that the

Quran says those who reject faith and then BELIEVE and again DISBELIEVE. if a Muslim rejects faith and is then killed for doing so how will he live to again BELIEVE and then DISBELIEVE. The atmosphere of this verse is that of free will and freedom of choice to everyone. If Allah wanted he would have said something about the punishment, if there was any, of those who reject Islam after accepting it. but Allah takes this to be clearly a private matter between them and Allah. I found many verses in the Quran that teach us NO PUNISHMENT for an apostate BUT I found no verse that says the contrary. Here is another verse about the freedom of expression in the Quran. many translators translate this wrongly and kill the meaning of the word making it a bogus and strange statement. Noble Verse 39:18 "Those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom Allah has guided, and those it is who are the men of understanding." The Quran tells the Muslims to listen to every thing and follow only the best of what is said. it does not tell them to kill people if they say something that is not according to the cultural norm."

The following two sets of Noble Verses were sent to me by brother Rached Blili; may Allah Almighty always be pleased with him. Let us look at Noble Verses 109:1-6 "Say : O ye that reject Faith! I worship not that which ye worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which ye have been wont to worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. **To you be your Way, and to me mine.**" Let us look at Noble Verse 42:15 "Now then, for that (reason), call (them to the Faith), and stand steadfast as thou art commanded, nor follow thou their vain desires; but say: **I believe in the Book which God has sent down; and I am commanded to judge justly between you.** God is our Lord and your Lord: for us (is the responsibility for) our deeds, and for you for your deeds. **There is no contention between us and you.** God will bring us together, and to Him is (our) Final Goal." The Noble Quran in all of the above Noble Verses is crystal clear about providing freedom of religion and choice to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims.

3- So how come Muslim Fundamentalists execute those who desert Islam then?

The interpretation of those who prohibit women from education, even though Islam clearly allows education for women, and prohibit them also from driving, and oppress men by forcing them to grow beards, even though beards are NOT mandatory in Islam, doesn't mean much to me. As we've seen above, it is quite clear, and beyond any questioning that Allah Almighty prohibited compulsion in religion and allowed the absolute freedom of religion to everyone. When Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him executed apostates, he did it because Muslims were at war time and because Islam was still partial, and Muslims needed protection from the hypocrites of the Jews and Christians who purposely entered Islam and deserted it later to create confusion among the Muslims as shown below in the Noble Verse.

The Sayings of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, regarding killing the renegades came when Islam was partial and the Muslims were dealing with wars all the time. So if the person wasn't with the Muslims, then he was certainly with his people, the pagans and the other non-Muslims, and he would've then had to join the evil forces to fight the Muslims. So the case back then was different than today.

I have no sympathy for those hypocrites of the Jews and Christians who got executed: "A section of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) say: Believe in the morning what is revealed to the believers (Muslims), but reject it at the end of the day; perchance they may (themselves) turn back (from Islam). (The Noble Quran, 3:72)"

4- My rebuttal about the historical Muslims' battles with the Apostates:

According to the Islamic history, when Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him died, some of the Muslims had deserted Islam for several reasons. The biggest of those reasons was that they opposed paying the Zakah (2.5% of annual income of Islamic taxes for the poor). Keep in mind that Allah Almighty constantly Warning the Prophet and the Muslims from the hypocrites (false believers). The Arabs before Islam were used to exploiting each others. The strong ate the poor, and high interest rates were enforced on loans given to the poor to ultimately force them to sell of their cattle, sons, daughters and/or wives as slaves.

After the death of our Prophet, some of the rich hypocrites decided to join with the Pagan Arab tribes to fight the Muslims and end Islam. The leader of the apostates/renegades was Musylama Al-Kath-thab or Musylama the liar in English, started his army of infidels in what we call today the country of Oman, which is more than 1,000 miles away from Mecca and Medina where the Muslims resided.

After Musylama became strong and popular and was able to gather a big amount of pagans and hypocrites to form an army, he led them to march to Mecca and Medina to fight the Muslims. When his army finally reached the mountains near Mecca, the Muslims had fought them several battles until he ultimately was killed and his army was soundly defeated.

The objection that I have with some Muslims is for the following reasons: **1-** It was the renegades or apostates that declared the war on the Muslims. The Muslims did not start the war.

2- We can't use the story of Musylama Al-Kath-thab to prove that it is ok today to kill any person who deserts Islam. Musylama was not a peaceful renegade. He wanted to destroy the Muslims through war. He had to be fought and killed. We can't use him as a standard and kill all renegades, especially those in the West for instance, who might embrace Islam and then desert it later due to the overwhelming anti-Islamic media and lies.

3- As I proved in this article, Allah Almighty in the Noble Quran talked about the apostates several times, and not a single command exists in the Noble Quran that orders the killing of any of them.

4- The Sayings of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, regarding killing the renegades came when Islam was partial and the Muslims were dealing with wars all the time. As I said above, if the person wasn't with the Muslims, then he was certainly with his people, the pagans and the other non-Muslims, and he would've then had to join the evil forces to fight the Muslims. So the case back then was different than today.

5- Today, if a weak-hearted and easily persuaded person for instance decides to embrace Islam and then gets easily persuaded to leave Islam, and then gets easily persuaded to embrace Islam again, and then gets easily persuaded to leave it and so on, then how is it right for us to apply the things that were applied to the hypocrites and Musylama Al-Kath-thab during and after our Prophet's time to this innocent individual? **6-** We must never forget Allah Almighty's Command

that honors the freedom of religion and choice in Islam in Noble Verse 2:256 and the others as shown in this article. **7-** Some Muslims claim that the Caliphs did not apply Noble Verse 2:256 and others to the renegades, because the Caliphs knew that these Noble Verses are not applicable to them. My response to this is that we:

1. Don't know if the Caliphs had any choice to apply them back in the hostile environment that they existed in back then.
2. The Caliphs are not the measuring stick that the Muslims today have to follow, especially after knowing that the Caliphs themselves **did things different from each others** several times before on very major Islamic issues: [1] [2].

5- Does Islam really mean to force someone to Islam or else kill him? Please visit [Does Islam really mean to force someone to Islam or else kill him?](#) **6- Renowned Muslim scholars agreeing with not all apostates to be killed:** There are too orthodox scholars who agree with you, i don't mean just some scholars, but famous renowned orthodox scholars, like Ibn tamiyya and the maliki scholar Abul Walid al-Baji support our stance on apostacy, therefor your article is and stance is also a right orthodox view, where no one has the right to criticize you, since renowned scholars confirmed our stance. Check the article below, let me know what you think of it, and if you would add it to the article.
Volume 4, Book 52, Number 260:

Narrated Ikrima:

Ali burnt some people and this news reached Ibn 'Abbas, who said, "Had I been in his place I would not have burnt them, as the Prophet said, 'Don't punish (anybody) with Allah's Punishment.' No doubt, I would have killed them, for the **Prophet said, 'If somebody (a Muslim) discards his religion, kill him.'** "

Many prominent scholars throughout the centuries have held the view that apostasy is not a hadd (singular for hudud = capital) offence. This view is founded on the fact that the Qur'an is completely silent on the death penalty for apostasy. In fact, freedom of religion is a fundamental tenet of Islam. In Surah al-Baqarah, 2:256, Allah explicitly states: "Let there be no compulsion in religion". This Medinan verse was revealed when some Companions asked the Prophet for permission to compel their relatives to profess Islam. It has been widely interpreted to mean that no one can be compelled to embrace Islam because religion depends upon faith and will, and this would be meaningless if induced by force. Islam itself means submission to the will of God; and the willing submission of the self to faith and belief must be attained through conviction and reason, not through coercion and duress.

Islam began by inviting and persuading people to embrace it on the merit of its rationality and truth. In Surah Yunus, 10:99, a verse revealed in Mecca at the advent of Islam, Allah says: "Had your Lord willed, everyone on earth would have believed. Do you then force people to become believers?" This and verse 2:256, together with the norm of Shari'a which affirms freedom of religion, have led many Muslim countries today to include in its Constitution an article on freedom of religion as a fundamental right. In his book, *The Punishment for Apostasy in Islam*, the former Chief Justice of Pakistan, SA Rahman, noted that even though the subject of apostasy occurred no less than 20 times in the Qur'an, the Holy Book remained silent on death as a punishment. Surah An-Nisa', 4:137-138, state that "Verily, those who believe, then disbelieve,

99 then believe again, then disbelieve, and then increase in their disbelief - Allah will never forgive them nor guide them to the path. Give to the hypocrites the tidings that there is for them a painful torment." If indeed it was Allah's intention to impose the death penalty for apostasy, then such occasion of repeated apostasy could have provoked such a punishment. But neither the first instance of apostasy, nor repeated apostasy brought about capital punishment.

Those who advocate the death penalty for apostasy based their reasoning on a hadith which proclaims, "kill whoever changes his religion". But this hadith is open to varying interpretations on several grounds.

First, this hadith is considered a weak hadith with just a single isnad (this means there is only one chain of transmission or narration) and thus according to the rules of Islamic jurisprudence, it is not enough to validate the death penalty.

Second, this hadith is also considered a general ('amm) hadith in that it is in need of specification (takhsis); for it would otherwise convey a meaning that is not within its purpose. The obvious reading of the hadith would, for example, make liable the death punishment on a Hindu or Christian who converts to Islam. This is obviously not the intention of the hadith. According to the rules of Islamic jurisprudence, when a text is interpreted once, it becomes open to further interpretation and specification. Therefore, many scholars interpret this hadith to apply only to cases of high treason (hirabah), which means declaring war against Islam, the Prophet, or God or the legitimate leadership of the ummah.

Third, and most importantly, there is no evidence to show that Prophet Muhammad saw or his Companions ever compelled anyone to embrace Islam, nor did they sentence anyone to death solely for renunciation of the faith.

Based on these three reasons and the Qur'anic principle of freedom of religion, prominent ulama (scholars) from the seventh to the twentieth centuries have come out with the position that there can be no death penalty for apostasy. According to Professor Hashim Kamali in his award-winning book, *Freedom of Expression in Islam*, two leading jurists of the generation succeeding the Companions, Ibrahim al-Nakha'i and Sufyan al-Thawri, both held that the apostate should be re-invited to Islam, but should never be condemned to death. The renowned Hanafi jurist, Shams al-Din al-Sarakhsi wrote that even though renunciation of faith is the greatest of offences, it is a matter between man and his Creator, and its punishment is postponed to the Day of Judgement. The Maliki jurist Abul Walid al-Baji and the renowned Hanbali jurist Ibn Taymiyyah have both held that apostasy is a sin which carries no hadd punishment. In modern times, the celebrated Sheikh of al-Azhar University, the late Mahmud Shaltut who was esteemed for his vast knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence and Qur'anic interpretation, wrote that many ulama are in agreement that hudud cannot be established by a solitary hadith and that unbelief by itself does not call for the death penalty. The current Sheikh of al-Azhar, who was Egypt's former Grand Mufti, Dr Mohammed Sayed Tantawi, also declared that apostasy is not a capital crime. Many scholars, including Ibn Taymiyyah, Shaltut and Tantawi, said that the death penalty was not meant to apply to a simple change of faith, but to hirabah, that is, when apostasy is accompanied by rebellion against the community and its legitimate leadership.

7- Conclusion: As we clearly see from the Noble Verses above, apostates are no longer to be

100 killed in Islam. I am not here promoting apostates, but there is no reason to kill someone who doesn't deserve to be killed. Certainly if the apostate is hostile toward the Muslims and joins the enemy in a war against them, or tries to corrupt the Muslims in the Muslim lands by trying to convert them to his/her new deviant religion, then the matter becomes different. But if a Westerner today for instance embraces Islam for a while and then changes his position due to the overwhelming false anti-Islamic media, then certainly killing that person would be a grave sin and a big mistake. www.answering-christianity.com

EVOLUTION AN UNPROVEN THEORY :Is there a guarantee that there is 100% evidence of it? no as simple as that.Their stories of evidences Based on bone similarities has no evidence how truthful they are because its mostly based on opinions.Fruits &vegetables have vitamins on them does it mean we came from them?Dogs have calcium in their bones.we have vitamins & calcium in our body ,so does it mean we came from them. God created the entire world matchable,livable,sutable for all humans & creatures.And he made us with similarities.All humans & animals breath from air,drink water.all living things,even trees have water in them like all humans.If god wants to create a cockroach a tree a bird a fish with human blood in them of course he can he is the creater.Its a miracle of god that we have similarities with monkies.It just proves god created the entire world with similarities with us.It does not prove we came from any animal or monkey.

THE QUR'AAN AND MODERN SCIENCE COMPATIBLE OR INCOMPATIBLE?

By Dr. ZAKIR NAIK ISLAMIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the dawn of human life on this planet, Man has always sought to understand Nature, his own place in the scheme of Creation and the purpose of Life itself. In this quest for Truth, spanning many centuries and diverse civilizations, organized religion has shaped human life and determined to a large extent, the course of history. While some religions have been based on books, claimed by their adherents to be divinely inspired, others have relied solely on human experience.

Al-Qur'aan, the main source of the Islamic faith, is a book believed by Muslims, to be of completely Divine origin. Muslims also believe that it contains guidance for all mankind. Since the message of the Qur'aan is believed to be for all times, it should be relevant to every age. Does the Qur'aan pass this test? In this booklet, I intend to give an objective analysis of the Muslim belief regarding the Divine origin of the Qur'aan, in the light of established scientific discoveries.

There was a time, in the history of world civilization, when 'miracles', or what was perceived to be a miracle, took precedence over human reason and logic. But how do we define the term 'miracle'? A miracle is anything that takes place out of the normal course of life and for which humankind has no explanation. However, we must be careful before we accept something as a miracle. An article in 'The Times of India' Mumbai, in 1993 reported that 'a saint' by the name 'Baba Pilot' claimed to have stayed continuously submerged under water in a tank for three consecutive days and nights. However, when reporters wanted to examine the base of the tank of water

101 where he claimed to have performed this ‘miraculous’ feat, he refused to let them do so. He argued by asking as to how one could examine the womb of a mother that gives birth to a child. The ‘Baba’ was hiding something. It was a gimmick simply to gain publicity. Surely, no modern man with even the slightest inkling towards rational thinking would accept such a ‘miracle’. If such false miracles are the tests of divinity, then we would have to accept Mr. P. C. Sorcar, the world famous magician known for his ingenious magical tricks and illusions, as the best God-man.

A book, claiming Divine origin, is in effect, claiming to be a miracle. Such a claim should be easily verifiable in any age, according to the standards of that age. Muslims believe, that the Qur’aan is the last and final revelation of God, the miracle of miracles revealed as a mercy to mankind. Let us therefore investigate the veracity of this belief.

I would like to thank Brother Musaddique Thange for his editorial assistance.

May Allah (swt) reward him for his efforts, Aameen

The Qur’aan and Modern Science: Compatible or Incompatible?

THE CHALLENGE OF THE QUR’AAN

Literature and poetry have been instruments of human expression and creativity, in all cultures. The world also witnessed an age when literature and poetry occupied pride of position, similar to that now enjoyed by science and technology. Muslims as well as non-Muslims agree that Al-Qur’aan is Arabic literature par excellence - that it is the best Arabic literature on the face of the earth.

The Qur’aan, challenges mankind in the following verses:

“And if ye are in doubt As to what We have revealed From time to time to Our Servant, then produce a Soorah Like thereunto; And call your witnesses or helpers (If there are any) besides Allah, If your (doubts) are true. But if ye cannot –And of a surety you cannot. then fear the Fire Whose fuel is Men and Stones – Which is prepared for those Who reject Faith.” [Al-Qur’aan 2:23-24] ¹

The same notation is followed throughout the book. References and translation of the Qur’aan are from the translation of the Qur’aan by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, new revised edition, 1989, published by Amana Corporation, Maryland, USA. The challenge of the Qur’aan, is to produce a single *Soorah* (chapter) like the *Soorahs* it contains. The same challenge is repeated in the Qur’aan several times. The challenge to produce a *Soorah*, which, in beauty, eloquence, depth and meaning is at least somewhat similar to a Qur’aanic *Soorah* remains unmet to this day. A modern rational man, however, would never accept a religious scripture, which says, in the best possible poetic language, that the world is flat. This is because we live in an age, where human reason, logic and science are given primacy. Not many would accept the Qur’aan’s extraordinarily beautiful language, as proof of its Divine origin. Any scripture

¹ Al-Qur’aan 2:23-24 indicates *Soorah* or Chapter No. 2 and *Ayaat* or Verses 23 and 24.

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claiming to be a divine revelation must also be acceptable on the strength of its own reason and logic.

According to the famous physicist and Nobel Prize winner, Albert Einstein, “Science without religion is lame. Religion without science is blind.” Let us therefore study the Qur’aan, and analyze whether **The Qur’aan and Modern Science are compatible or incompatible?**

The Qur'aan is not a book of science but a book of 'signs', i.e. *ayats*. There are more than six thousand 'signs' in the Qur'aan of which more than a thousand deal with science. We all know that many a times Science takes a 'U-turn'. In this book I have considered only established scientific facts and not mere hypotheses and theories that are based on assumptions and are not backed by proof.

I. ASTRONOMY

CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE: 'THE BIG BANG'

The creation of the universe is explained by astrophysicists in a widely accepted phenomenon, popularly known as the 'Big Bang'. It is supported by observational and experimental data gathered by astronomers and astrophysicists for decades. According to the 'Big Bang', the whole universe was initially one big mass (Primary Nebula). Then there was a 'Big Bang' (Secondary Separation) which resulted in the formation of Galaxies. These then divided to form stars, planets, the sun, the moon, etc. The origin of the universe was unique and the probability of it occurring by 'chance' is zero. The Qur'aan contains the following verse, regarding the origin of the universe: **"Do not the Unbelievers see That the heavens and the earth Were joined together (as one Unit of Creation), before We clove them asunder?"** [Al-Qur'aan 21:30]

The striking congruence between the Qur'aanic verse and the 'Big Bang' is inescapable! How could a book, which first appeared in the deserts of Arabia 1400 years ago, contain this profound scientific truth?

THERE WAS AN INITIAL GASEOUS MASS BEFORE THE CREATION OF GALAXIES

Scientists say that before the galaxies in the universe were formed, celestial matter was initially in the form of gaseous matter. In short, huge gaseous matter or clouds were present before the formation of the galaxies. To describe initial celestial matter, the word 'smoke' is more appropriate than gas. The following Qur'aanic verse refers to this state of the universe by the word *dhukhan* which means smoke.

"Moreover, He Comprehended In His design the sky, And it had been (as) smoke: He said to it And to the earth: 'Come ye together, Willingly

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or unwillingly.' They said: 'We do come (Together), in willing obedience.'" [Al-Qur'aan 41:11]

Again, this fact is a corollary to the 'Big Bang' and was not known to the

Arabs during the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). What then, could have been the source of this knowledge?

THE SPHERICAL SHAPE OF THE EARTH

In early times, people believed that the earth is flat. For centuries, men were afraid to venture out too far, lest they should fall off the edge. Sir Francis Drake was the first person who proved that the earth is spherical when he sailed around it in 1597. Consider the following Qur'aanic verse regarding the alternation of day and night: **"Seest thou not that Allah merges Night into Day And He merges Day into Night?"** [Al-Qur'aan 31:29]

Merging here means that the night slowly and gradually changes to day and vice versa. This phenomenon can only take place if the earth is spherical. If

103 the earth was flat, there would have been a sudden change from night to day and from day to night.

The following verse also alludes to the spherical shape of the earth: **“He created the heavens And the earth In true (proportions): He makes the Night Overlap the Day, and the Day Overlap the Night.”** [Al-Qur’aan 39:5]

The Arabic word used here is *Kawwara* meaning ‘to overlap’ or ‘to coil’ – the way a turban is wound around the head. The overlapping or coiling of the day and night can only take place if the earth is spherical.

The earth is not exactly round like a ball, but geo-spherical i.e. it is flattened at the poles. The following verse contains a description of the earth’s shape:

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“And the earth, moreover, Hath He made egg shaped.” ² [Al-Qur’aan 79:30]

The Arabic word for egg here is *dahaha*, which means an ostrich-egg. The shape of an ostrich-egg resembles the geo-spherical shape of the earth. Thus the Qur’aan correctly describes the shape of the earth, though the prevalent notion when the Qur’aan was revealed was that the earth is flat.

THE LIGHT OF THE MOON IS REFLECTED LIGHT

It was believed by earlier civilizations that the moon emanates its own light. Science now tells us that the light of the moon is reflected light. However this fact was mentioned in the Qur’aan 1,400 years ago in the following verse:

“Blessed is He Who made Constellations in the skies, And placed therein a Lamp And a Moon giving light.” [Al-Qur’aan 25:61]

The Arabic word for the sun in the Qur’aan, is *shams*. It is referred to as *siraaaj*, which means a ‘torch’ or as *wahhaaj* which means ‘a blazing lamp’ or as *diya* which means ‘shining glory’. All three descriptions are appropriate to the sun, since it generates intense heat and light by its internal combustion.

The Arabic word for the moon is *qamar* and it is described in the Qur’aan as *muneer*, which is a body that gives *nur* i.e. light. Again, the Qur’aanic description matches perfectly with the true nature of the moon, which does not give off light itself and is an inert body that reflects the light of the sun.

Not once in the Qur’aan, is the moon mentioned as *siraaaj*, *wahhaaj* or *diya* or the sun as *nur* or *muneer*. This implies that the Qur’aan recognizes the difference between the nature of sunlight and moonlight.

² The Arabic word *dahaha* has been translated by A. Yusuf Ali as “vast expanse”, which also is correct. The word *dahaha* also means an ostrich-egg.

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Consider the following verses related to the nature of light from the sun and the moon: **“It is He who made the sun To be a shining glory And the moon to be a light (Of beauty).”** [Al-Qur’aan 10:5]

“See ye not How Allah has created The seven heavens One above another, “And made the moon A light in their midst, and made the sun As a (Glorious) Lamp?” [Al-Qur’aan 71:15-16]

THE SUN ROTATES

For a long time European philosophers and scientists believed that the earth stood still in the centre of the universe and every other body including the sun moved around it. In the West, this geocentric concept of the universe was prevalent right from the time of Ptolemy in the second century B.C. In 1512,

Nicholas Copernicus put forward his Heliocentric Theory of Planetary Motion, which asserted that the sun is motionless at the centre of the solar system with the planets revolving around it.

In 1609, the German scientist Yohannus Keppler published the '*Astronomia Nova*'. In this he concluded that not only do the planets move in elliptical orbits around the sun, they also rotate upon their axes at irregular speeds. With this knowledge it became possible for European scientists to explain correctly many of the mechanisms of the solar system including the sequence of night and day.

After these discoveries, it was thought that the Sun was stationary and did not rotate about its axis like the Earth. I remember having studied this fallacy from Geography books during my school days. Consider the following Qur'aanic verse: **"It is He Who created The Night and the Day, And the sun and the moon: All (the celestial bodies) Swim along, each in its Rounded course."** [Al-Qur'aan 21:33]

The Arabic word used in the above verse is *yasbahûn*. The word *yasbahûn* is derived from the word *sabaha*. It carries with it the idea of motion that comes The Qur'aan and Modern Science: Compatible or Incompatible?

from any moving body. If you use the word for a man on the ground, it would not mean that he is rolling but would mean he is walking or running. If you use the word for a man in water it would not mean that he is floating but would mean that he is swimming.

Similarly, if you use the word *yasbah* for a celestial body such as the sun it would not mean that it is only flying through space but would mean that it is also rotating as it goes through space. Most of the school textbooks have incorporated the fact that the sun rotates about its axis. The rotation of the sun about its own axis can be proved with the help of an equipment that projects the image of the sun on the table top so that one can examine the image of the sun without being blinded. It is noticed that the sun has spots which complete a circular motion once every 25 days i.e. the sun takes approximately 25 days to rotate around its axis.

In fact, the sun travels through space at roughly 150 miles per second, and takes about 200 million years to complete one revolution around the center of our Milky Way Galaxy.

"It is not permitted To the Sun to catch up The Moon, nor can The Night outstrip the Day: Each (just) swims along In (its own) orbit (According to Law)." [Al-Qur'aan 36:40]

This verse mentions an essential fact discovered by modern astronomy, i.e. the existence of the individual orbits of the Sun and the Moon, and their journey through space with their own motion. The 'fixed place' towards, which the sun travels, carrying with it the solar system, has been located exactly by modern astronomy. It has been given a name, the Solar Apex. The solar system is indeed moving in space towards a point situated in the constellation of Hercules (alpha Layer) whose exact location is firmly established.

The moon rotates around its axis in the same duration that it takes to revolve around the earth. It takes approximately 29½ days to complete one rotation. One cannot help but be amazed at the scientific accuracy of the Qur'aanic

verses. Should we not ponder over the question: "What was the source of knowledge contained in the Qur'aan?"

THE SUN WILL EXTINGUISH AFTER A CERTAIN PERIOD

The light of the sun is due to a chemical process on its surface that has been taking place continuously for the past five billion years. It will come to an end at some point of time in the future when the sun will be totally extinguished leading to extinction of all life on earth. Regarding the impermanence of the sun's existence the Qur'aan says: **"And the Sun Runs its course For a period determined For it; that is The decree of (Him) The exalted in Might, The All-Knowing."** [Al-Qur'aan 36:38] ³

The Arabic word used here is *mustaqarr*, which means a place or time that is determined. Thus the Qur'aan says that the sun runs towards a determined place, and will do so only up to a pre-determined period of time – meaning that it will end or extinguish.

THE PRESENCE OF INTERSTELLAR MATTER

Space outside organized astronomical systems was earlier assumed to be a vacuum. Astrophysicists later discovered the presence of bridges of matter in this interstellar space. These bridges of matter are called plasma, and consist of completely ionized gas containing equal number of free electrons and positive ions. Plasma is sometimes called the fourth state of matter (besides the three known states viz. solid, liquid and gas). The Qur'aan mentions the presence of this interstellar material in the following verse: **"He Who created the heavens And the earth and all That is between."** [Al-Qur'aan 25:59]

It would be ridiculous, for anybody to even suggest that the presence of interstellar galactic material was known 1400 years ago.

³ A similar message is conveyed in the Qur'an in 13:2, 35:13, 39:5 and 39:21.
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THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE

In 1925, an American astronomer by the name of Edwin Hubble, provided observational evidence that all galaxies are receding from one another, which implies that the universe is expanding. The expansion of the universe is now an established scientific fact. This is what Al-Qur'aan says regarding the nature of the universe: **"With the power and skill Did We construct The Firmament: For it is We Who create The vastness of Space."** [Al-Qur'aan 51:47]

The Arabic word *mūsi'ûn* is correctly translated as 'expanding it', and it refers to the creation of the expanding vastness of the universe. Stephen Hawking, in his book, 'A Brief History of Time', says, "The discovery that the universe is expanding was one of the great intellectual revolutions of the 20th century."

The Qur'aan mentioned the expansion of the universe, before man even learnt to build a telescope! Some may say that the presence of astronomical facts in the Qur'aan is not surprising since the Arabs were advanced in the field of astronomy. They are correct in acknowledging the advancement of the Arabs in the field of astronomy. However they fail to realize that the Qur'aan was revealed centuries before the Arabs excelled in astronomy. Moreover many of the scientific facts mentioned above regarding astronomy, such as the origin

106 of the universe with a Big Bang, were not known to the Arabs even at the peak of their scientific advancement. The scientific facts mentioned in the Qur'aan are therefore not due to the Arabs' advancement in astronomy. Indeed, the reverse is true. The Arabs advanced in astronomy, because astronomy occupies a place in the Qur'aan.

II. PHYSICS

THE EXISTENCE OF SUBATOMIC PARTICLES

In ancient times a well-known theory by the name of 'Theory of Atomism' was widely accepted. This theory was originally proposed by the Greeks, in particular by a man called Democritus, who lived about 23 centuries ago. Democritus and the people that came after him, assumed that the smallest unit of matter was the atom. The Arabs used to believe the same. The Arabic word *dharrah* most commonly meant an atom. In recent times modern science has discovered that it is possible to split even an atom. That the atom can be split further is a development of the 20th century. Fourteen centuries ago this concept would have appeared unusual even to an Arab. For him the *dharrah* was the limit beyond which one could not go. The following Qur'aanic verse however, refuses to acknowledge this limit: **"The Unbelievers say, 'Never to us will come The Hour': say, 'Nay! But most surely, By my Lord, it will come Upon you – by Him Who knows the unseen – From Whom is not hidden The least little atom In the Heavens or on earth: Nor is there anything less Than that, or greater, but Is in the Record Perspicuous.'"** [Al-Qur'aan 34:3] ⁴

This verse refers to the Omniscience of God, His knowledge of all things, hidden or apparent. It then goes further and says that God is aware of everything, including what is smaller or bigger than the atom. Thus the verse clearly shows that it is possible for something smaller than the atom to exist, a fact discovered only recently by modern science.

⁴ A similar message is conveyed in the Qur'an in 10:61.

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III. GEOGRAPHY

THE WATER CYCLE

In 1580, Bernard Palissy was the first man to describe the present day concept of 'water cycle'. He described how water evaporates from the oceans and cools to form clouds. The clouds move inland where they rise, condense and fall as rain. This water gathers as lakes and streams and flows back to the ocean in a continuous cycle. In the 7th century B.C., Thales of Miletus believed that surface spray of the oceans was picked up by the wind and carried inland to fall as rain. In earlier times people did not know the source of underground water. They thought the water of the oceans, under the effect of winds, was thrust towards the interior of the continents. They also believed that the water returned by a secret passage, or the Great Abyss. This passage is connected to the oceans and has been called the 'Tartarus', since Plato's time. Even Descartes, a great thinker of the eighteenth century, subscribed to this view. Till the nineteenth century, Aristotle's theory was prevalent. According to this theory, water was condensed in cool mountain caverns and formed underground lakes that fed springs. Today, we know that the

107 rainwater that seeps into the cracks of the ground is responsible for this.

The water cycle is described by the Qur'aan in the following verses: **“Seest thou not that Allah Sends down rain from The sky, and leads it Through springs in the earth? Then He causes to grow, Therewith, produce of various Colours.”** [Al-Qur'aan 39:21]

“He sends down rain From the sky And with it gives life to The earth after it is dead: Verily in that are Signs For those who are wise.” [Al-Qur'aan 30:24]

“And We send down water From the sky according to (Due) measure, and We cause it To soak in the soil; And We certainly are able To drain it off (with ease).” [Al-Qur'aan 23:18]

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No other text dating back 1400 years ago gives such an accurate description of the water cycle.

WINDS IMPREGNATE THE CLOUDS

“And We send the fecundating winds, Then cause the rain to descend From the sky, therewith providing You with water (in abundance).” [Al-Qur'aan 15:22]

The Arabic word used here is *lawâqih*, which is the plural of *laqih* from *laqaha*, which means to impregnate or fecundate. In this context, impregnate means that the wind pushes the clouds together increasing the condensation that causes lightning and thus rain. A similar description is found in the Qur'aan: **“It is Allah Who sends The Winds, and they raise The Clouds: then does He Spread them in the sky As He wills, and break them Into fragments, until thou seest Raindrops issue from the midst Thereof: then when He has Made them reach such Of His servants as He wills, Behold, they do rejoice!”** [Al-Qur'aan 30:48]

The Qur'aanic descriptions are absolutely accurate and agree perfectly with modern data on hydrology. The water cycle is described in several verses of the Glorious Qur'aan, including 3:9, 7:57, 13:17, 25:48-49, 36:34, 50:9-11, 56:68-70, 67:30 and 86:11.

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IV. GEOLOGY

MOUNTAINS ARE LIKE PEGS (STAKES)

In Geology, the phenomenon of 'folding' is a recently discovered fact.

Folding is responsible for the formation of mountain ranges. The earth's crust, on which we live, is like a solid shell, while the deeper layers are hot and fluid, and thus inhospitable to any form of life. It is also known that the stability of the mountains is linked to the phenomenon of folding, for it was the folds that were to provide foundations for the reliefs that constitute the mountains. Geologists tell us that the radius of the Earth is about 3,750 miles and the crust on which we live is very thin, ranging between 1 to 30 miles. Since the crust is thin, it has a high possibility of shaking. Mountains act like stakes or tent pegs that hold the earth's crust and give it stability. The Qur'aan contains exactly such a description in the following verse: **“Have We not made The earth as a wide Expanse, And the mountains as pegs?”** [Al-Qur'aan 78:6-7]

The word *awtad* means stakes or pegs (like those used to anchor a tent); they are the deep foundations of geological folds. A book named 'Earth' is considered as a basic reference textbook on geology in many universities around the world. One of the authors of this book is Frank Press, who was the President of the Academy of Sciences in the USA for 12 years and was the Science Advisor to former US President Jimmy Carter. In this book he illustrates the mountain in a wedge-shape and the mountain itself as a small part of the whole, whose root is deeply entrenched in the ground.⁵ According to Dr. Press, the mountains play an important role in stabilizing the crust of the earth.

The Qur'aan clearly mentions the function of the mountains in preventing the earth from shaking: **"And We have set on the earth Mountains standing firm, Lest it should shake with them."** [Al-Qur'aan 21:31]

⁵ *Earth*, Press and Siever, p. 435. Also see *Earth Science*, Tarbuck and Lutgens, p. 157.

The Qur'aanic descriptions are in perfect agreement with modern geological data. **MOUNTAINS FIRMLY FIXED**

The surface of the earth is broken into many rigid plates that are about 100 km in thickness. These plates float on a partially molten region called asthenosphere. Mountain formations occur at the boundary of the plates. The earth's crust is 5 km thick below oceans, about 35 km thick below flat continental surfaces and almost 80 km thick below great mountain ranges.

These are the strong foundations on which mountains stand. The Qur'aan also speaks about the strong mountain foundations in the following verse: **"And the mountains Hath He firmly fixed."** [Al-Qur'aan 79:32] ⁶

⁶ A similar message is contained in the Qur'an in 88:19, 31:10 and 16:15

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V. OCEANOLOGY

BARRIER BETWEEN SWEET AND SALT WATERS

Consider the following Qur'aanic verses: **"He has let free the two bodies Of flowing water, Meeting together: Between them is a Barrier Which they do not transgress."** [Al-Qur'aan 55:19-20]

In the Arabic text the word *barzakh* means a barrier or a partition. This barrier is not a physical partition. The Arabic word *maraja* literally means 'they both meet and mix with each other'. Early commentators of the Qur'aan were unable to explain the two opposite meanings for the two bodies of water, i.e. they meet and mix, and at the same time, there is a barrier between them.

Modern Science has discovered that in the places where two different seas meet, there is a barrier between them. This barrier divides the two seas so that each sea has its own temperature, salinity and density. ⁷ Oceanologists are now in a better position to explain this verse. There is slanted unseen water barrier between the two seas through which water from one sea passes to the other. But when the water from one sea enters the other sea, it loses its distinctive characteristic and becomes homogenized with the other water. In a way this barrier serves as a transitional homogenizing area for the two waters. This scientific phenomenon mentioned in the Qur'aan was also confirmed by Dr. William Hay who is a well-known marine scientist and Professor of Geological Sciences at the University of Colorado, U.S.A. The Qur'aan

109 mentions this phenomenon also in the following verse: **“And made a separating bar between the two bodies Of flowing water?”** [Al-Qur’aan 27:61]

This phenomenon occurs in several places, including the divider between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean at Gibraltar. But when the Qur’aan speaks about the divider between fresh and salt water, it mentions the

⁷ *Principles of Oceanography*, Davis, pp. 92-93.

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existence of “a forbidding partition” with the barrier. **“It is He Who has Let free the two bodies Of flowing water: One palatable and sweet, And the other salty and bitter; Yet has He Made a barrier between them, And a partition that is forbidden To be passed.”** [Al-Qur’aan 25:53]

Modern science has discovered that in estuaries, where fresh (sweet) and saltwater meet, the situation is somewhat different from that found in places where two seas meet. It has been discovered that what distinguishes fresh water from salt water in estuaries is a “pycnocline zone with a marked density discontinuity separating the two layers.” ⁸ This partition (zone of separation) has salinity different from both the fresh water and the salt water. ⁹

This phenomenon occurs in several places, including Egypt, where the river Nile flows into the Mediterranean Sea.

DARKNESS IN THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN

Prof. Durga Rao is an expert in the field of Marine Geology and was a professor at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. He was asked to comment on the following verse: **“Or (the Unbelievers’ state) Is like the depths of darkness In a vast deep ocean, Overwhelmed with billow Topped by billow, Topped by (dark) clouds: Depths of darkness, one Above another: if a man Stretches out his hand, He can hardly see it! For any to whom Allah Giveth not light, there is no light!”** [Al-Qur’aan 24:40]

Prof. Rao said that scientists have only now been able to confirm, with the help of modern equipment that there is darkness in the depths of the ocean.

Humans are unable to dive unaided underwater for more than 20 to 30 meters, and cannot survive in the deep oceanic regions at a depth of more than 200 meters. This verse does not refer to all seas because not every sea can be

⁸ *Oceanography*, Gross, p. 242. Also see *Introductory Oceanography*, Thurman, pp. 300-301.

⁹ *Oceanography*, Gross, p. 244 and *Introductory Oceanography*, Thurman, pp. 300-301.

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described as having accumulated darkness layered one over another. It refers especially to a deep sea or deep ocean, as the Qur’aan says, “darkness in a vast deep ocean”. This layered darkness in a deep ocean is the result of two causes: A light ray is composed of seven colours. These seven colours are Violet, Indigo, Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange and Red (VIBGYOR). The light ray undergoes refraction when it hits water. The upper 10 to 15 metres of water absorb the red colour. Therefore if a diver is 25 metres under water and gets wounded, he would not be able to see the red colour of his blood, because the red colour does not reach this depth. Similarly orange rays are

110 absorbed at 30 to 50 metres, yellow at 50 to 100 metres, green at 100 to 200 metres, and finally, blue beyond 200 metres and violet and indigo above 200 metres. Due to successive disappearance of colour, one layer after another, the ocean progressively becomes darker, i.e. darkness takes place in layers of light. Below a depth of 1000 meters there is complete darkness. ¹⁰

. The sun's rays are absorbed by clouds, which in turn scatter light rays thus causing a layer of darkness under the clouds. This is the first layer of darkness. When light rays reach the surface of the ocean they are reflected by the wave surface giving it a shiny appearance. Therefore it is the waves which reflect light and cause darkness. The unreflected light penetrates into the depths of the ocean. Therefore the ocean has two parts. The surface characterized by light and warmth and the depth characterized by darkness. The surface is further separated from the deep part of the ocean by waves. The internal waves cover the deep waters of seas and oceans because the deep waters have a higher density than the waters above them. The darkness begins below the internal waves. Even the fish in the depths of the ocean cannot see; their only source of light is from their own bodies.

The Qur'aan rightly mentions: **"Darkness in a vast deep ocean overwhelmed with waves topped by waves"**.

¹⁰ *Oceans*, Elder and Pernetta, p. 27.

In other words, above these waves there are more types of waves, i.e. those found on the surface of the ocean. The Qur'aanic verse continues, "topped by (dark) clouds; depths of darkness, one above another."

These clouds as explained are barriers one over the other that further cause darkness by absorption of colours at different levels.

Prof. Durga Rao concluded by saying, "1400 years ago a normal human being could not explain this phenomenon in so much detail. Thus the information must have come from a supernatural source".

VI. BIOLOGY

EVERY LIVING THING IS MADE OF WATER

Consider the following Qur'aanic verse: **"Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one Unit of Creation), before We clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?"** [Al-Qur'aan 21:30]

Only after advances have been made in science, do we now know that cytoplasm, the basic substance of the cell is made up of 80% water. Modern research has also revealed that most organisms consist of 50% to 90% water and that every living entity requires water for its existence. Was it possible 14 centuries ago for any human-being to guess that every living being was made of water? Moreover would such a guess be conceivable by a human being in the deserts of Arabia where there has always been scarcity of water? The following verse refers to the creation of animals from water: **"And Allah has created Every animal from water."** [Al-Qur'aan 24:45]

The following verse refers to the creation of human beings from water: **"It is He Who has Created man from water: Then has He established Relationships of lineage And marriage: for thy Lord Has power (over all things)."** [Al-Qur'aan 25:54]

VII. BOTANY

PLANTS CREATED IN PAIRS, MALE AND FEMALE

Previously humans did not know that plants too have male and female gender distinctions. Botany states that every plant has a male and female gender. Even the plants that are unisexual have distinct elements of both male and female. **“And has sent Down water from the sky.’ With it have We produced Diverse pairs of plants Each separate from the others.”** [Al-Qur’aan 20:53]

FRUITS CREATED IN PAIRS, MALE AND FEMALE

“And fruit Of every kind He made In pairs, two and two.” [Al-Qur’aan 13:3]

Fruit is the end product of reproduction of the superior plants. The stage preceding fruit is the flower, which has male and female organs (stamens and ovules). Once pollen has been carried to the flower, they bear fruit, which in turn matures and frees its seed. All fruits therefore imply the existence of male and female organs; a fact that is mentioned in the Qur’aan.

In certain species, fruit can come from non-fertilized flowers (parthenocarpic fruit) e.g. bananas, certain types of pineapple, fig, orange, vine, etc. They also have definite sexual characteristics.

EVERYTHING MADE IN PAIRS

“And of everything We have created pairs.” [Al-Qur’aan 51:49]

This refers to things other than humans, animals, plants and fruits. It may also be referring to a phenomenon like electricity in which the atoms consist of negatively – and positively – charged electrons and protons.

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“Glory to Allah, Who created In pairs all things that The earth produces, as well as Their own (human) kind And (other) things of which They have no knowledge.” [Al-Qur’aan 36:36]

The Qur’aan here says that everything is created in pairs, including things that the humans do not know at present and may discover later.

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VIII. ZOOLOGY

ANIMALS AND BIRDS LIVE IN COMMUNITIES

“There is not an animal (That lives) on the earth, Nor a being that flies On its wings, but (forms Part of) communities like you.” [Al-Qur’aan 6:38]

Research has shown that animals and birds live in communities, i.e. they organize, and live and work together.

THE FLIGHT OF BIRDS

Regarding the flight of birds the Qur’aan says: **“Do they not look at The birds, held poised In the midst of (the air And) the sky? Nothing Holds them up but (the power Of) Allah. Verily in this Are Signs for those who believe.”** [Al-Qur’aan 16:79]

A similar message is repeated in the Qur'aan in the verse: **“Do they not observe The birds above them, Spreading their wings And folding them in? None can uphold them Except (Allah) Most Gracious: Truly it is He That watches over all things.”** [Al-Qur'aan 67:19]

The Arabic word *amsaka* literally means, 'to put one's hand on, seize, hold, hold someone back,' which expresses the idea that Allah holds the bird up in His power. These verses stress the extremely close dependence of the birds' behaviour on Divine order. Modern scientific data has shown the degree of perfection attained by certain species of birds with regard to the programming of their movements. It is only the existence of a migratory programme in the genetic code of the birds that can explain the long and complicated journey that very young birds, without any prior experience and without any guide, are able to accomplish. They are also able to return to the departure point on a definite date.

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Prof. Hamburger in his book 'Power and Fragility' gives the example of 'mutton-bird' that lives in the Pacific with its journey of over 15,000 miles in the shape of figure '8'. It makes this journey over a period of 6 months and comes back to its departure point with a maximum delay of one week. The highly complicated instructions for such a journey have to be contained in the birds' nervous cells. They are definitely programmed. Should we not reflect on the identity of this 'Programmer'?

THE BEE

“And thy Lord taught the Bee To build its cells in hills, On trees, and in (men's) habitations; Then to eat of all The produce (of the earth), And find with skill the spacious Paths of its Lord.” [Al-Qur'aan 16:68-69]

Von-Frisch received the Nobel Prize in 1973 for his research on the behaviour and communication of the bees. The bee, after discovering any new garden or flower, goes back and tells its fellow bees the exact direction and map to get there, which is known as 'bee dance'. The meanings of this insect's movements that are intended to transmit information between worker bees have been discovered scientifically using photography and other methods. The Qur'aan mentions in the above verse how the bee finds with skill the spacious paths of its Lord.

The worker bee or the soldier bee is a female bee. In Soorah Al-Nahl chapter no. 16, verses 68 and 69 the gender used for the bee is the female gender (*fa'slukî* and *kulî*), indicating that the bee that leaves its home for gathering food is a female bee. In other words the soldier or worker bee is a female bee. In fact, in Shakespeare's play, "Henry the Fourth", some of the characters speak about bees and mention that the bees are soldiers and that they have a king. That is what people thought in Shakespearean times. They thought that the worker bees are male bees and they go home and are answerable to a king bee. This, however, is not true. The worker bees are females and they do not report to a king bee but to a queen bee. But it took modern investigations in the last 300 years to discover this.

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SPIDER'S WEB / HOME IS FRAGILE

The Qur'aan mentions in Soorah Al-'Ankabût, **"The parable of those who Take protectors other than Allah Is that of the Spider, Who builds (to itself) A house; but truly The flimsiest of houses Is the Spider's house – If they but knew."** [Al-Qur'aan 29:41]

Besides giving the physical description of the spider's web as being very flimsy, delicate and weak, the Qur'aan also stresses on the flimsiness of the relationship in the spider's house, where the female spider many a times kills its mate, the male spider.

LIFESTYLE AND COMMUNICATION OF ANTS

Consider the following Qur'aanic verse: **"And before Solomon were marshaled His hosts – of Jinns and men And birds, and they were all Kept in order and ranks. "At length, when they came To a (lowly) valley of ants, One of the ants said: 'O ye ants, get into Your habitations, lest Solomon And his hosts crush you (Under foot) without knowing it.'"** [Al-Qur'aan 27:17-18]

In the past, some people would have probably mocked at the Qur'aan, taking it to be a fairy tale book in which ants talk to each other and communicate sophisticated messages. In recent times, research has shown us several facts about the lifestyle of ants, which were not known earlier to humankind.

Research has shown that the animals or insects whose lifestyle is closest in resemblance to the lifestyle of human beings are the ants. This can be seen from the following findings regarding ants:

- (a) The ants bury their dead in a manner similar to the humans.
- (b) They have a sophisticated system of division of labour, whereby they have managers, supervisors, foremen, workers, etc.
- (c) Once in a while they meet among themselves to have a 'chat'.
- (d) They have an advanced method of communication among themselves.

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- (e) They hold regular markets wherein they exchange goods.
- (f) They store grains for long periods in winter and if the grain begins to bud, they cut the roots, as if they understand that if they leave it to grow, it will rot. If the grains stored by them get wet due to rains, they take these grains out into the sunlight to dry, and once these are dry, they take them back inside as though they know that humidity will cause development of root systems and thereafter rotting of the grain.

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IX. MEDICINE

HONEY HAS HEALING PROPERTIES

The bee assimilates juices of various kinds of flowers and fruit and forms within its body the honey, which it stores in its cells of wax. Only a couple of centuries ago man came to know that honey comes from the belly of the bee.

This fact was mentioned in the Qur'aan 1,400 years ago in the following verse: **"There issues From within their bodies A drink of varying colours,**

We are now aware that honey has a healing property and also a mild antiseptic property. The Russians used honey to cover their wounds in World War II. The wound would retain moisture and would leave very little scar tissue. Due to the density of honey, no fungus or bacteria would grow in the wound. A person suffering from an allergy of a particular plant may be given honey from that plant so that the person develops resistance to that allergy. Honey is rich in fructose and vitamin K. Thus the knowledge contained in the Qur’aan regarding honey, its origin and properties, was far ahead of the time it was revealed.

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X. PHYSIOLOGY

BLOOD CIRCULATION AND THE PRODUCTION OF MILK

The Qur’aan was revealed 600 years before the Muslim scientist Ibn Nafees described the circulation of the blood and 1,000 years before William Harwey brought this understanding to the Western world. Roughly thirteen centuries before it was known what happens in the intestines to ensure that organs are nourished by the process of digestive absorption, a verse in the Qur’aan described the source of the constituents of milk, in conformity with these notions. To understand the Qur’aanic verse concerning the above concepts, it is important to know that chemical reactions occur in the intestines and that, from there, substances extracted from food pass into the blood stream via a complex system; sometimes by way of the liver, depending on their chemical nature. The blood transports them to all the organs of the body, among which are the milk-producing mammary glands.

In simple terms, certain substances from the contents of the intestines enter into the vessels of the intestinal wall itself, and these substances are transported by the blood stream to the various organs.

This concept must be fully appreciated if we wish to understand the following verse in the Qur’aan: **“And verily in cattle there is A lesson for you. We give you to drink Of what is inside their bodies, Coming from a conjunction Between the contents of the Intestine and the blood, A milk pure and pleasant for Those who drink it.”** [Al-Qur’aan 16:66] ¹¹

“And in cattle (too) ye Have an instructive example: From within their bodies We produce (milk) for you To drink; there are, in them, (Besides),

¹¹ Translation of this Qur’anic verse is from the book “The Bible, the Qur’an and Science” by Dr. Maurice Bucaille.

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numerous (other) Benefits for you; And of their (meat) ye eat.” [Al-Qur’aan 23:21]

The Qur’aanic description of the production of milk in cattle is strikingly similar to what modern physiology has discovered.

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XI. EMBRYOLOGY

A LEECH-LIKE SUBSTANCE

A few years ago a group of Arabs collected all information concerning embryology from the Qur'aan, and followed the instruction of the Qur'aan:

“If ye realise this not, ask Of those who possess the Message.” [Al-Qur'aan 16:43 & 21:7]

All the information from the Qur'aan so gathered, was translated into English and presented to Prof. (Dr.) Keith Moore, who was the Professor of Embryology and Chairman of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Toronto, in Canada. At present he is one of the highest authorities in the field of Embryology. He was asked to give his opinion regarding the information present in the Qur'aan concerning the field of embryology. After carefully examining the translation of the Qur'aanic verses presented to him, Dr. Moore said that most of the information concerning embryology mentioned in the Qur'aan is in perfect conformity with modern discoveries in the field of embryology and does not conflict with them in any way. He added that there were however a few verses, on whose scientific accuracy he could not comment. He could not say whether the statements were true or false, since he himself was not aware of the information contained therein. There was also no mention of this information in modern writings and studies on embryology. One such verse is: **“Proclaim! (or Read!) In the name Of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created – Created man, out of A (mere) clot Of congealed blood.”** [Al-Qur'aan 96:1-2]

The word *alaq* besides meaning a congealed clot of blood also means something that clings, a leech-like substance. Dr. Keith Moore had no knowledge whether an embryo in the initial stages appears like a leech. To check this out he studied the initial stage of the embryo under a very powerful microscope in his laboratory and compared what he observed with a diagram of a leech and he was astonished at the striking resemblance between the two! The Qur'aan and Modern Science: Compatible or Incompatible?

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In the same manner, he acquired more information on embryology that was hitherto not known to him, from the Qur'aan. Dr. Keith Moore answered about eighty questions dealing with embryological data mentioned in the Qur'aan and Hadith. Noting that the information contained in the Qur'aan and Hadith was in full agreement with the latest discoveries in the field of embryology, Prof. Moore said, “If I was asked these questions thirty years ago, I would not have been able to answer half of them for lack of scientific information”

Dr. Keith Moore had earlier authored the book, ‘The Developing Human’. After acquiring new knowledge from the Qur'aan, he wrote, in 1982, the 3rd edition of the same book, ‘The Developing Human’. The book was the recipient of an award for the best medical book written by a single author. This book has been translated into several major languages of the world and is used as a textbook of embryology in the first year of medical studies. In 1981, during the Seventh Medical Conference in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, Dr. Moore said, “It has been a great pleasure for me to help clarify statements in the Qur'aan about human development. It is clear to me that these

116 statements must have come to Muhammad from God or Allah, because almost all of this knowledge was not discovered until many centuries later. This proves to me that Muhammad must have been a messenger of God or Allah.”¹²

Dr. Joe Leigh Simpson, Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, at the Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, U.S.A., proclaims: “...these Hadiths, sayings of Muhammad (pbuh) could not have been obtained on the basis of the scientific knowledge that was available at the time of the writer (7th century). It follows that not only is there no conflict between genetics and religion (Islam) but in fact religion (Islam) may guide science by adding revelation to some of the traditional scientific approaches... there exist statements in the Qur’aan shown centuries later to

¹² The reference for this statment is the video tape titled ‘*This is the Truth*’. For a copy of this video tape contact the Islamic Research Foundation.
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be valid which support knowledge in the Qur’aan having been derived from God.”

MAN CREATED FROM A DROP EMITTED FROM BETWEEN THE BACK BONE AND THE RIBS

“Now let man but think From what he is created! He is created from A drop emitted – Proceeding from between The back bone and the ribs.”

[Al-Qur’aan 86:5-7]

In embryonic stages, the reproductive organs of the male and female, i.e. the testicles and the ovaries, begin their development near the kidney between the spinal column and the eleventh and twelfth ribs. Later they descend; the female gonads (ovaries) stop in the pelvis while the male gonads (testicles) continue their descent before birth to reach the scrotum through the inguinal canal. Even in the adult after the descent of the reproductive organ, these organs receive their nerve supply and blood supply from the Abdominal Aorta, which is in the area between the backbone (spinal column) and the ribs. Even the lymphatic drainage and the venous return goes to the same area.

HUMAN BEINGS CREATED FROM *NUTFAH* (Minute Quantity of Liquid)

The Glorious Qur’aan mentions no less than eleven times that the human being is created from *nutfah*, which means a minute quantity of liquid or a trickle of liquid which remains after emptying a cup. This is mentioned in several verses of the Qur’aan including 22:5 and 23:13. ¹³

Science has confirmed in recent times that only one out of an average of three million sperms is required for fertilising the ovum. This means that only a

¹³ The same is also mentioned in the Qur’an in 16:4, 18:37, 35:11, 36:77, 40:67, 53:46, 75:37, 76:2 and 80:19.

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1/three millionth part or 0.00003% of the quantity of sperms that are emitted is required for fertilisation.

HUMAN BEINGS CREATED FROM *SULALAH*

117 (Quintessence of liquid)

“And made his progeny From a quintessence Of the nature of A fluid despised.” [Al-Qur’aan 32:8]

The Arabic word *sulâlah* means quintessence or the best part of a whole. We have come to know now that only one single spermatozoon that penetrates the ovum is required for fertilization, out of the several millions produced by man. That one spermatozoon out of several millions, is referred to in the Qur’aan as *sulâlah*. *Sulâlah* also means gentle extraction from a fluid. The fluid refers to both male and female germinal fluids containing gametes. Both ovum and sperm are gently extracted from their environments in the process of fertilization.

MAN CREATED FROM NUTFATUN AMSHAAJ

(Mingled liquids)

Consider the following Qur’aanic verse: **“Verily We created Man from a drop Of mingled sperm.”** [Al-Qur’aan 76:2]

The Arabic word *nutfatin amshaajin* means mingled liquids. According to some commentators of the Qur’aan, mingled liquids refers to the male or female agents or liquids. After mixture of male and female gamete, the zygote still remains *nutfah*. Mingled liquids can also refer to spermatid fluid that is formed of various secretions that come from various glands.

Therefore *nutfatin amshaj*, i.e. a minute quantity of mingled fluids refers to the male and female gametes (germinal fluids or cells) and part of the surrounding fluids.

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SEX DETERMINATION

The sex of a fetus is determined by the nature of the sperm and not the ovum. The sex of the child, whether female or male, depends on whether the 23rd pair of chromosomes is XX or XY respectively. Primarily sex determination occurs at fertilization and depends upon the type of sex chromosome in the sperm that fertilizes an ovum. If it is an ‘X’ bearing sperm that fertilizes the ovum, the fetus is a female and if it is a ‘Y’ bearing sperm then the fetus is a male. **“That He did create In pairs – male and female, From a seed when lodged (In its place).”** [Al-Qur’aan 53:45-46]

The Arabic word *nutfah* means a minute quantity of liquid and *tumnâ* means ejaculated or planted. Therefore *nutfah* specifically refers to sperm because it is ejaculated. The Qur’aan says: **“Was he not a drop of sperm emitted (In lowly form)? “Then did he become A clinging clot; Then did (Allah) make And fashion (him) In due proportion. “And of him He made Two sexes, male And female.”** [Al-Qur’aan 75:37-39]

Here again it is mentioned that a small quantity (drop) of sperm (indicated by the word *nutfatan min maniyyin*) which comes from the man is responsible for the sex of the fetus.

Mothers-in-law in the Indian subcontinent, by and large prefer having male grandchildren and often blame their daughters-in-law if the child is not of the desired sex. If only they knew that the determining factor is the nature of the male sperm and not the female ovum! If they were to blame anybody, they

118 should blame their sons and not their daughters-in-law since both the Qur'aan and Science hold that it is the male fluid that is responsible for the sex of the child!

FOETUS PROTECTED BY THREE VEILS OF DARKNESS

“He makes you, In the wombs of your mothers, In stages, one after another, In three veils of darkness.” [Al-Qur'aan 39:6]

According to Prof. Keith Moore these three veils of darkness in the Qur'aan refer to:

- (i) anterior abdominal wall of the mother
- (ii) the uterine wall
- (iii) the amnio-chorionic membrane.

EMBRYONIC STAGES

“Man We did create From a quintessence (of clay); Then We placed him As (a drop of) sperm In a place of rest, firmly fixed; Then We made the sperm Into a clot of congealed blood; Then of that clot We made A (foetus) lump; then We Made out of that lump Bones and clothed the bones With flesh; then We developed Out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, The Best to create!” [Al-Qur'aan 23:12-14]

In this verse Allah states that man is created from a small quantity of liquid which is placed in a place of rest, firmly fixed (well established or lodged) for which the Arabic word *qarârin makîn* is used.

The uterus is well protected from the posterior by the spinal column supported firmly by the back muscles. The embryo is further protected by the amniotic sac containing the amniotic fluid. Thus the foetus has a well protected dwelling place. This small quantity of fluid is made into *alaqah*, meaning something which clings. It also means a leech-like substance. Both descriptions are scientifically acceptable as in the very early stages the foetus clings to the wall and also appears to resemble the leech in shape. It also behaves like a

leech (blood sucker) and acquires its blood supply from the mother through the placenta. The third meaning of the word *alaqah* is a blood clot. During The Qur'aan and Modern Science: Compatible or Incompatible?

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this *alaqah* stage, which spans the third and fourth week of pregnancy, the blood clots within closed vessels. Hence the embryo acquires the appearance of a blood clot in addition to acquiring the appearance of a leech. In 1677, Hamm and Leeuwenhoek were the first scientists to observe human sperm cells (spermatozoa) using a microscope. They thought that a sperm cell contained a miniature human being which grew in the uterus to form a newborn. This was known as the perforation theory. When scientists discovered that the ovum was bigger than the sperm, it was thought by De Graf and others that the foetus existed in a miniature form in the ovum. Later, in the 18th century Maupertuis propagated the theory of biparental inheritance. The *alaqah* is transformed into *mudghah* which means 'something that is chewed (having teeth marks)' and also something that is tacky and small which can be put in the mouth like gum. Both these explanations are scientifically correct. Prof. Keith Moore took a piece of plaster seal and made it into the size and shape of the early stage of foetus and chewed it between the teeth to make it into a 'Mudgha'. He compared this

119 with the photographs of the early stage of foetus. The teeth marks resembled the 'somites' which is the early formation of the spinal column.

This *mudghah* is transformed into bones (*izâm*). The bones are clothed with intact flesh or muscles (*lahm*). Then Allah makes it into another creature. Prof. Marshall Johnson is one of the leading scientists in US, and is the head of the Department of Anatomy and Director of the Daniel Institute at the Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia in US. He was asked to comment on the verses of the Qur'aan dealing with embryology. He said that the verses of the Qur'aan describing the embryological stages cannot be a coincidence. He said it was probable that Muhammad (pbuh) had a powerful microscope. On being reminded that the Qur'aan was revealed 1400 years ago, and microscopes were invented centuries after the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Prof. Johnson laughed and admitted that the first microscope invented could not magnify more than 10 times and could not show a clear picture. Later he said: "I see nothing here in conflict with the concept that Divine intervention was involved when Muhammad (pbuh) recited the Qur'aan."

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According to Dr. Keith Moore, the modern classification of embryonic development stages which is adopted throughout the world, is not easily comprehensible, since it identifies stages on a numerical basis i.e. stage I, stage II, etc. The divisions revealed in the Qur'aan are based on distinct and easily identifiable forms or shapes, which the embryo passes through. These are based on different phases of prenatal development and provide elegant scientific descriptions that are comprehensible and practical.

Similar embryological stages of human development have been described in the following verses: **"Was he not a drop Of sperm emitted (In lowly form)? Then did he become a clinging clot; Then did (Allah) make and fashion (him) In due proportion. And of him He made Two sexes, male and female."** [Al-Qur'aan 75:37-39]

"Him Who created thee, fashioned thee in due proportion, And gave thee a just bias; In whatever Form He wills, Does He put thee together." [Al-Qur'aan 82:7-8]

EMBRYO PARTLY FORMED AND PARTLY UNFORMED

At the *mugdhah* stage, if an incision is made in the embryo and the internal organ is dissected, it will be seen that most of them are formed while the others are not yet completely formed.

According to Prof. Johnson, if we describe the embryo as a complete creation, then we are only describing that part which is already created. If we describe it as an incomplete creation, then we are only describing that part which is not yet created. So, is it a complete creation or an incomplete creation? There is no better description of this stage of embryogenesis than the Qur'aanic description, "partly formed and partly unformed", as in the following verse:

"We created you Out of dust, then out of Sperm, then out of a leech-like Clot, then out of a morsel Of flesh, partly formed And partly unformed."

[Al-Qur'aan 22:5]

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Scientifically we know that at this early stage of development there are some cells which are differentiated and there are some cells that are undifferentiated – some organs are formed and yet others unformed.

SENSE OF HEARING AND SIGHT

The first sense to develop in a developing human embryo is hearing. The foetus can hear sounds after the 24th week. Subsequently, the sense of sight is developed and by the 28th week, the retina becomes sensitive to light.

Consider the following Qur'aanic verses related to the development of the senses in the embryo: **“And He gave You (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling (And understanding).”** [Al-Qur'aan 32:9]

“Verily We created Man from a drop Of mingled sperm, In order to try him: So We gave him (the gifts), Of Hearing and Sight.” [Al-Qur'aan 76:2]

“It is He Who has created For you (the faculties of) Hearing, sight, feeling And understanding: little thanks It is ye give!” [Al-Qur'aan 23:78]

In all these verses the sense of hearing is mentioned before that of sight. Thus the Qur'aanic description matches with the discoveries in modern embryology.

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XII. GENERAL SCIENCE

FINGERPRINTS

“Does man think that We Cannot assemble his bones? Nay, We are able to put Together in perfect order The very tips of his fingers.” [Al-Qur'aan 75:3-4]

Unbelievers argue regarding resurrection taking place after bones of dead people have disintegrated in the earth and how each individual would be identified on the Day of Judgement. Almighty Allah answers that He can not only assemble our bones but can also reconstruct perfectly our very fingertips.

Why does the Qur'aan, while speaking about determination of the identity of the individual, speak specifically about fingertips? In 1880, fingerprinting became the scientific method of identification, after research done by Sir Francis Golt. No two persons in the world can ever have exactly the same fingerprint pattern. That is the reason why police forces worldwide use fingerprints to identify the criminal. 1400 years ago, who could have known the uniqueness of each human's fingerprint? Surely it could have been none other than the Creator Himself!

PAIN RECEPTORS PRESENT IN THE SKIN

It was thought that the sense of feeling and pain was only dependent on the brain. Recent discoveries prove that there are pain receptors present in the skin without which a person would not be able to feel pain. When a doctor examines a patient suffering from burn injuries, he verifies the degree of burns by a pinprick. If the patient feels pain, the doctor is happy, because it indicates that the burns are superficial and the pain receptors are intact. On the other hand if the patient does not feel any pain, it indicates that it is a deep burn and the pain receptors have been destroyed. The Qur'aan gives an

121 indication of the existence of pain receptors in the following verse: **“Those who reject Our signs, We shall soon Cast into the Fire; As often as their skins Are roasted through, We shall change them For fresh skins, That they may taste The Penalty: for Allah Is Exalted in Power, Wise.”** [Al-Qur’aan 4:56]

Prof. Tagatat Tejasen, Chairman of the Department of Anatomy at Chiang Mai University in Thailand, has spent a great amount of time on research of pain receptors. Initially he could not believe that the Qur’aan mentioned this scientific fact 1,400 years ago. He later verified the translation of this particular Qur’aanic verse. Prof. Tejasen was so impressed by the scientific accuracy of the Qur’aanic verse, that at the 8th Saudi Medical Conference held in Riyadh on the Scientific Signs of Qur’aan and Sunnah he proclaimed in public: “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad (pbuh) is His Messenger.”

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CONCLUSION

To attribute the presence of scientific facts in the Qur’aan to coincidence would be against common sense and a true scientific approach. The Qur’aan invites all humans to reflect on the Creation of this universe in the verse:

“Behold! In the creation Of the heavens and the earth, And the alternation Of Night and Day – There are indeed Signs For men of understanding.” [Al-Qur’aan 3:190]

The scientific evidences of the Qur’aan clearly prove its Divine Origin. No human could have produced a book, fourteen hundred years ago, that would contain profound scientific facts, to be discovered by humankind centuries later. The Qur’aan, however, is not a book of Science but a book of ‘Signs’. These signs invite Man to realize the purpose of his existence on earth, and to live in harmony with Nature. The Qur’aan is truly a message from Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. It contains the same message of the Oneness of God, that was preached by all prophets, right from Adam, Moses, Jesus to Muhammad (peace be upon them).

Several detailed tomes have been written on the subject of Qur’aan and modern science and further research in this field is on. Inshallah, this research will help mankind to come closer to the Word of the Almighty. This booklet contains only a few of the scientific facts present in the Qur’aan. I cannot claim to have done full justice to the subject. Prof.

Tejasen accepted Islam on the strength of just one scientific ‘sign’ mentioned in the Qur’aan. Some people may require ten signs while some may require hundred signs to be convinced about the Divine Origin of the Qur’aan. Some would be unwilling to accept the Truth even after being shown a thousand signs. The Qur’aan condemns such a closed mentality in the verse: **“Deaf, dumb and blind, They will not return (To the path).”** [Al-Qur’aan 2:18]

The Qur’aan contains a complete code of life for the individual and society. Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah), the Qur’aanic way of life is far superior to the ‘isms’ that modern man has invented out of sheer ignorance. Who can give better guidance than the Creator Himself?

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Did Islam Exist Before Muhammad (Peace & Blessings Be Upon Him)?

God does not born or die he is forever. Jesus, Moses, Mohammad & all other people of Bible, Quran & Torah were great messengers prophets of god not sons of god they were created by 1 true god, creator, Allah. So any creation can't be the 1 creator Allah. So they were messengers, prophets of god. How can creator be part of what he has created Himself!!! So he is not part of any creation again he is not a creation & has no partners no father ,mother, daughter ,son, brother, sister ,wife & no gender simply unique beyond comparable & 1 & 1 only. From Adam to Jesus god sent his messages for every generation or period of time but it was always destroyed by mankind & the devils conspiracy to take mankind towards hell. Because all previous books were massed up by humans Allah sent his last messenger not son or god, but messenger Mohammad & sent him Quran & it's messages to guide humans towards Allah & heaven. Allah has promised to Keep Quran same until the Day of Judgment & challenged humans to create another accurate book like Quran & said if you can't then surrender to your lord (the only way of peace & heaven). Majority of things science has discovered until now 80% of Quran had all those undiscovered answers from the last 1400 years when science didn't have any answers. The other 20% answer was & is in Quran. Maybe it will take science another 1400 years to find it. All 100% answers are in Quran. Science can't prove a single verse of Quran wrong. If you do a research on Quran, bible and science you will find facts. Facts are stranger than fiction. In the bible it says Jesus bowed his head on floor just like Muslims bow their head on floor while praying .You should do research on bible, Quran & science if you believe in god so you can find facts on Islam. If I teach a parrot a message & send it to someone & parrot tells the message to that person and leaves & that person starts saying that parrot is my son that would make no sense, because that was my

messenger not son. Jesus was taken up alive & after that people started calling him son of god. He came

to establish Islam & was a messenger of 1 god. Christianity started after Jesus was gone, Jesus will comeback & die as a human & Muslim. Quran is the only accurate 100% words of god & word of god can't have errors then it would not be word of god & according to science bibles & Torahs has many errors but they can't prove a verse in Quran wrong. Muslims believe there is no god but Allah & Prophet Mohammad is the last & final prophet & messenger of Allah.

God forbids you not, with regards to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them; for God loveth those who are just
(Qur'an, 60:8)

Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad were all messengers & prophets of 1 God Allah so Islam is the 1st religion & it's the last religion because God is Allah & God is forever so is God's religion which is only Islam & it is also forever. Finally Islam always existed even before Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus & Muhammad because it's the only true religion from God Allah.

Conclusion of the entire book

He said: "I am indeed a servant of God: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; 019.031 "And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live; 019.032 "(He) hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable; 019.033 "So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)"! 019.034 Such (was) Jesus the son of Mary: (it is) a statement of truth, about which they (vainly) dispute. 019.035 It is not befitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! when He determines a matter, He only says to it, "Be", and it is. Al-Quran.

Some references of the information of this book:

1)www.answering-christianity.com 2)www.islamtomorrow.com
3)<http://www.irf.net/irf/comparativereligion/index.htm> 4) www.peacetv.tv 5)www.whyislam.org
6)www.guideus.tv 7)www.irf.net 8) www.quranandscience.com

Information arranged & organized by Mr.Faisal

(MORE INFORMATION ADDED by Faisal Fahim) Rebuttal to Sam Shamoun's Article "Muhammad and the Arab Criteria of Demon Possession" By Bassam Zawadi

Sam Shamoun originally wrote an article trying to prove that Muhammad (pbuh) was deceived by Satan. I then responded back to his article and now Shamoun has responded back to my rebuttal. Sam Shamoun said: Several corrections and responses to Zawadi's comments are necessary. First of all, the quote from Abu Lahab's wife was made in conjunction to several other sources to establish the point that Muhammad's contemporaries believed he was demon possessed. Had she been the only person that we presented then Zawadi's point would carry some credibility, since she was obviously a hostile witness who could have simply sought to slander Muhammad. But when her testimony is combined with the witness of several other individuals then her opinion isn't as one-sided or biased as Zawadi would want his readers to believe. After all, her position agrees with that of Muhammad's foster parents:

"Some months after our return he and his brother were with our lambs behind the tents when his brother came running and said to us, 'Two men clothed in white have seized that Qurayshi brother of mine and thrown him down and opened up his belly, and are stirring him up.' We ran towards him and found him standing up with a livid face. We took hold of him and asked him what was the matter. He said, 'Two men with white raiment came and threw me down and opened up my belly and searched therein for I know not what,' so we took him back to our tent.

His father said to me, 'I am afraid that this child has had a stroke, so take him back to his family before the result appears.' So we picked him up and took him to his mother who asked why we had brought him when I had been anxious for his welfare and desirous of keeping him with me. I said to her, 'God has let my son live so far and I have done my duty. I am afraid that ill will befall him, so I have brought him back to you as you wished.' She asked me what happened and gave me no peace until I told her. When she asked if I feared a demon possessed him, I replied THAT I DID. She answered that no demon had any power over her son who had a great future before him, and then she told me how when she was pregnant with him a light went out from her which illumined the castles of Busra and Syria, ..." (*The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*, with introduction and notes by Alfred Guillaume [Oxford University Press, Karachi, Tenth Impression 1995] pp. 71-72; bold and capital emphasis ours)

It even agrees with Muhammad himself since he initially believed that he might have been possessed:

... I recited it, and then he desisted and departed I woke up, and it was as though these words had been written on my heart. There was no one of God's creation more hateful to me than a poet or a madman; I could not bear to look at either of them. I said to myself, "Your humble servant (meaning himself) is either a poet or a madman, but Quraysh shall never say this of me. I shall take myself to a mountain crag, hurl myself down from it, kill myself, and find relief in that way." (*The History of al-Tabari: Muhammad at Mecca*, translated and annotated by W. Montgomery Watt and M.V. McDonald [State University of New York Press, Albany, 1988], Volume VI, p. 71; bold emphasis ours)

And: Then he went to Khadijah and said, "Khadijah, I think that I have gone mad." "No, by God," she said, "Your Lord would never do that to you. You have never committed a wicked act." Khadijah went to Waraqa b. Nawfal and told him what had happened. He said, "If what you say is true, your husband is a prophet. He will meet adversity from his people. If I live long enough, I shall believe in him."

After this, Gabriel did not come to him for a while, and Khadijah said to him, "I think that your Lord MUST HAVE COME TO HATE YOU." Then God revealed to him:

By the forenoon, and by the night, when it is still, your Lord has not forsaken you, nor does he hate you. (*The History of al-Tabari: Muhammad at Mecca*, translated and annotated by W. Montgomery Watt and M.V. McDonald [State University of New York Press, Albany, 1988], Volume VI, p. 70; bold, capital and underline emphasis ours) As a side note, notice how similar the reaction of Muhammad's first wife was with that of Abu Lahab's wife when Muhammad's spirit did not show up for awhile:

Narrated Jundub bin Sufyan:

Once Allah's Apostle became sick and could not offer his night prayer (Tahajjud) for two or three nights. Then a lady (the wife of Abu Lahab) came and said, "O Muhammad! I think that *your Satan has forsaken you*, for I have not seen him with you for two or three nights!" On that Allah revealed: 'By the fore-noon, and by the night when it darkens, your Lord (O Muhammad) has neither forsaken you, nor hated you.' (93.1-3) (*Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 6, Book 60, Number 475) Both these women knew that there was something wrong with Muhammad being abandoned by his spirit for a period of time.

My Response: Again purely circumstantial evidence. Sam quotes people who THOUGHT and FEARED that the Prophet was possessed. However, did they continue to believe so? Did the Prophet's wife Khadija continue believing that her husband (pbuh) was possessed? Did she ever think he was possessed? Or did she only give her opinion as to why she thought that God stopped sending revelations to the Prophet. Did that mean she was right? As for the Prophet and the suicide attempts read about it here.

So again, no objective evidence provided. So let's move on... Sam Shamoun said: Returning to Muhammad's analysis of his first encounter with the spirit, it is interesting to read that he believed that Satan actually lived inside of him and had to be removed: Anas b. Malik reported that Gabriel came to the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) while he was playing with his playmates. He took hold of him and lay him prostrate on the ground and tore open his breast and took out the heart from it and then extracted a blood-clot out of it and said: That was THE PART OF SATAN IN THEE. And then he washed it with the water of Zamzam in a golden basin and then it was joined together and restored to its place. The boys came running to his mother, i. e. his nurse, and said: Verily Muhammad has been murdered. They all rushed toward him (and found him all right). His color was changed, Anas said. I myself saw the marks of a needle on his breast. (*Sahih Muslim*, Book 1, Number 311)

Yet other narrations report that Muhammad still had a Satan circulating in him, even though Allah supposedly protected Muhammad from the evil spirit's mischief! Narrated Aisha: Aisha said: One day Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) went out of her (Aisha's apartment) during the night and she felt jealous. Then he came and he saw me (in what agitated state of mind) I was. He said: Aisha, what has happened to you? Do you feel jealous? Thereupon she said: How can it be (that a woman like me) should not feel jealous in regard to a husband like you? Thereupon Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said: It was your devil who had come to you, and she said: Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) is there along with me a devil? He said: Yes. I said: Is devil attached to everyone? He said: Yes. I (Aisha) again said: Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) is it with you also? He said: Yes, but my Lord has helped me against him as such I am absolutely safe from his mischief. (*Sahih Muslim*, Book 039, Number 6759)

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Do not visit women whose husbands are away from home, for the Devil circulates in you like your blood." He was asked if this applied to him also and said, "To me also, but Allah has helped me against him so that I may be safe."

Tirmidhi transmitted it. (*Tirmidhi Hadith*, Number 931; Alim CD-Rom Version) Yet Allah didn't prevent others from being harmed by these evil spirits, it seems. After all, Muhammad wasn't the only one who was possessed by a Satan, as the above narrations plainly indicate, and one of his close companions and

the first caliph, Abu Bakr, even warned the Muslims to avoid him whenever his Satan would come to possess him: The Apostle of God died with no one of this community having a claim against him concerning anything wrongfully taken [for which the punishment would be] one lash of the whip or [even] less. I have a Satan who takes possession of me; so when he comes to me, avoid me so that I may have no [evil] effect [even] on your hair and your skins. (*The History of Al-Tabari: The Conquest of Arabia*, translated by Fred M. Donner [State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993], Volume IX, pp. 11-12; bold emphasis ours)

My Response: As for the hadith saying that the Prophet with the help of God became safe from the devil, well what is the problem? I don't understand why Shamoun highlighted that part of the hadith. What point is Sam trying to make? Didn't Jesus have help from God when he wanted to overcome devils? (Luke 11:20)

Plus in Islam we believe that there are sects of Jinn. Some are Muslim, Christian, Jews etc. This life is a test for both men and Jinn... Surah 6:130 "O ye assembly of Jinns and men! came there not unto you apostles from amongst you, setting forth unto you My signs, and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?" They will say: "We bear witness against ourselves." It was the life of this world that deceived them. So against themselves will they bear witness that they rejected Faith.

Surah 46:29-32 Behold, We turned towards thee a company of Jinns (quietly) listening to the Quran: when they stood in the presence thereof, they said, "Listen in silence!" When the (reading) was finished, they returned to their people, to warn (them of their sins). They said, "O our people! We have heard a Book revealed after Moses, confirming what came before it: it guides (men) to the Truth and to a Straight Path. "O our people, hearken to the one who invites (you) to God, and believe in him: He will forgive you your faults, and deliver you from a Penalty Grievous. "If any does not hearken to the one who invites (us) to God, he cannot frustrate (God's Plan) on earth, and no protectors can he have besides God: such men (wander) in manifest error."

Surah 72:11;14-15 'There are among us some that are righteous, and some the contrary: we follow divergent paths. 'Amongst us are some that submit their wills (to God), and some that swerve from justice. Now those who submit their wills - they have sought out (the path) of right conduct: 'But those who swerve,- they are (but) fuel for Hell-fire'-

The hadith which shows that Gabriel said that this was part of Satan in the Prophet's heart and the devil circulating in the blood people. These are just figures of speech only to emphasize that the devil is always around trying to persuade people to do evil.

There are many examples of hadith, which talks about the devil in a figure of speech. (*,*,*,*,*,*) We could also see this in the Bible in Matthew 16:23, 1 Timothy 1:20

How can the Prophet be possessed by Satan when he was a great enemy of Satan... Saheeh Bukhari Volume 4, Book 55, Number 590: Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: The Prophet used to seek Refuge with Allah for Al-Hasan and Al-Husain and say: "Your forefather (i.e. Abraham) used to seek Refuge with Allah for Ishmael and Isaac by reciting the following: 'O Allah! I seek Refuge with Your Perfect Words from every devil and from poisonous pests and from every evil, harmful, envious eye.' "

Saheeh Muslim Book 004, Number 1166: Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported: The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: When any one of you is in doubt about his prayer and he does not know how

much he has prayed, three or four (rak'ahs). he should cast aside his doubt and base his prayer on what he is sure of. then perform two prostrations before giving salutations. If he has prayed five rak'ahs, they will make his prayer an even number for him, and if he has prayed exactly four, they will be humiliation for the devil. The Prophet assured us that the devil could never take an image of him...

Book 029, Number 5638: Jabir reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: He who saw me in sleep in fact saw me, for it is not possible for the satan to appear in my form; and he also said: When any one of you sees a hulm he should not inform anyone, for it is a sort of vain sport of devil in the state of sleep.

Sunan Abu Dawud Book 14, Number 2597: Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr: When the Apostle of Allah (peace_be_upon_him) was travelling and night came on, he said: O earth, my Lord and your Lord is Allah; I seek refuge in Allah from your evil, the evil of what you contain, the evil of what has been created in you, and the evil of what creeps upon you; I seek refuge in Allah from lions, from large black snakes, from other snakes, from scorpions, from the evil of jinn which inhabit a settlement, and from a parent and his offspring. Now yes the devil is 'attached to everyone' in the sense that there is always a Jinn who is trying to incite evil in the person. However, the Prophet was an exception because he overcame the devil with the will of God. However, even if the devil tried to incite the Prophet to do evil, would that make the Prophet demon possessed? Of course not!

Why don't we try to see what the Bible says about the devil...Job 2:3 ³ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited (*cuwth*) me against him to ruin him without any reason." *Cuwth* means...1) to incite, allure, instigate, entice a) (Hiphil) 1) to incite (to a request) 2) to allure, lure 3) to instigate (bad sense)

Source:http://www.blueletterbible.org/tmp_dir/words/5/11451244526142.html

Shamoun has a problem with the devil trying to incite the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) yet his own Bible says that the devil incited God Himself to do wrong! Would that make the God of the Bible demon possessed?

Sam Shamoun said: This is in stark contrast to the Lord Jesus who expressly stated that Satan had absolutely no hold on him: "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. HE HAS NO POWER OVER ME;" John 14:30 In fact, Christ went so far as to insure believers that they would be given his sovereign authority to overcome and trample Satan and his demons: "The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us IN YOUR NAME!' And he said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I HAVE GIVEN YOU AUTHORITY to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'" Luke 10:17-20

My Response: Okay fine I also just quoted hadith that shows that the Prophet was safe from the devil by the grace of God and that the Prophet would also give ways to his followers on how to repel and resist the devil.

Sam Shamoun said: Furthermore, Waraqa bin Naufal, the Christian monk whom Khadijah took Muhammad to see after his encounter with the spirit, suspected that Satan might have deceived Muhammad: "Waraqa was dumbfounded at this, and said, 'If Gabriel has actually placed his feet upon the earth, he has done so for the best of people thereupon. And he never came down for anyone except a prophet. For he is the companion of all the prophets and messengers, the one whom God sends down to them. I believe what you tell me of him. Send for 'Abd Allah's son, so that I may question him, hear what

he says and talk to him. I am afraid it may be someone other than Gabriel, for certain devils imitate him and by so doing can mislead and corrupt some men. This can result in a man becoming confused and even crazy whereas before he had been of sound mind.'" (Ibn Kathir, *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad (Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya)*, Volume I, translated by professor Trevor Le Gassick, reviewed by Dr. Ahmed Fareed [Garnet Publishing Limited, 8 Southern Court, south Street Reading RG1 4QS, UK; The Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, 1998], pp. 296-297; bold and underline emphasis ours) In light of the foregoing, the testimony of Abu Lahab's wife holds a lot of weight since it agrees with the belief of Muhammad's foster parents as well as his own initial assessment of the situation.

My Response: Again, like before Sam is quoting someone who THOUGHT and was AFRAID that the Prophet might have had an experience with a devil. However, did Waraqa continue to believe in this?...Sahih Bukhari Volume 1, Book 1, Number 3: Narrated 'Aisha: (the mother of the faithful believers) The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allah's Apostle was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright day light, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the journey food for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to take his food like-wise again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet replied, "I do not know how to read. The Prophet added, "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists) has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.'" (96.1, 96.2, 96.3) Then Allah's Apostle returned with the Inspiration and with his heart beating severely. Then he went to Khadija bint Khuwailid and said, "Cover me! Cover me!" They covered him till his fear was over and after that he told her everything that had happened and said, "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadija replied, "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your Kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones."

Khadija then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa bin Naufal bin Asad bin 'Abdul 'Uzza, who, during the PreIslamic Period became a Christian and used to write the writing with Hebrew letters. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadija said to Waraqa, "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqa asked, "O my nephew! What have you seen?" Allah's Apostle described whatever he had seen. Waraqa said, "This is the same one who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out." Allah's Apostle asked, "Will they drive me out?" Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqa died and the Divine Inspiration was also paused for a while.

Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullah Al-Ansari while talking about the period of pause in revelation reporting the speech of the Prophet "While I was walking, all of a sudden I heard a voice from the sky. I looked up and saw the same angel who had visited me at the cave of Hira' sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth. I got afraid of him and came back home and said, 'Wrap me (in blankets).' And then Allah revealed the following Holy Verses (of Quran):

'O you (i.e. Muhammad)! wrapped up in garments!' Arise and warn (the people against Allah's Punishment),... up to 'and desert the idols.' (74.1-5) After this the revelation started coming strongly, frequently and regularly." *Volume 4, Book 55, Number 605*: Narrated 'Aisha: The Prophet returned to Khadija while his heart was beating rapidly. She took him to Waraqa bin Naufal who was a Christian convert and used to read the Gospels in Arabic Waraqa asked (the Prophet), "What do you see?" When he told him, Waraqa said, "That is the same angel whom Allah sent to the Prophet) Moses. Should I live till you receive the Divine Message, I will support you strongly." See also Volume 6, Book 60, Number 478, Volume 9, Book 87, Number 111 and in Sahih Muslim, Book 001, Number 0301:

Sam Shamoun said: Now is this at all similar to the accusations which were leveled against Jesus in Mark 3:22? Not even close as the context itself shows: "And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they should crush him; for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him. *And whenever the unclean spirits beheld him, they fell down before him and cried out, 'You are the Son of God.'* And he strictly ordered them not to make him known... And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He is possessed by Be-el'zebul, and by the prince of demons HE CASTS OUT DEMONS.' And he called them to him, and said to them in parables, 'How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man; then indeed he may plunder his house. 'Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin' -- for they had said, 'He has an unclean spirit.'" Mark 3:9-12, 22-30

Notice that the reason why the scribes accused Jesus of being possessed WAS DUE TO HIS HAVING THE POWER TO CAST OUT DEMONS! Unlike Muhammad, they didn't accuse Jesus of demon possession because the Spirit had left him or had delayed in returning to him, or because Christ had contemplated suicide as a result of thinking that he may have been possessed. Zawadi's appeal to Mark 3:22 is nothing more than the fallacy of false analogy since he is comparing apples and oranges at this point.

My Response: The reason for the accusation is irrelevant. Because it is still possible for someone to cast out demons by the power of the devil. Therefore, it was a good reason for them to accuse Jesus because it was possible. The reason for the accusation is irrelevant, the issue is whether the accusation holds any water. It does not against the glorious Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Sam Shamoun said: Now Zawadi may try to use Jesus' statements in Mark regarding Satan dividing against himself to prove that the Quran is true since it attacks Satan as an enemy of God. Why would Satan attack himself in the Quran if the latter were his work since he would be divided against himself and could therefore not stand? This position betrays a certain naiveté on how Satan actually works, at least according to the Holy Bible. The Scriptures plainly teach that Satan will and does masquerade his lies in the guise of religious truth: "I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband. *But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if some one comes and preaches another Jesus than the one we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough.*" 2 Corinthians 11:2-4

Paul warned believers from Satan's cunning in preaching another Jesus and a different Gospel in order to mislead them from the truth. Satan even appears as an angel and raises ministers who practice

righteousness to deceive people!"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, *for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light*. So it is not strange *if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness*. Their end will correspond to their deeds." 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 What the foregoing shows is that Satan doesn't mind producing a religion which attacks him since he realizes that any religion which doesn't originate from the true God cannot affect him. A religion that does not originate from God and which does not have the authority of the risen and exalted Christ can do nothing to stop the Adversary or undermine his cause to destroy the souls of men. In other words, just because a religion happens to mention Satan this doesn't make it correct, nor does it mean that it has the right Satan or the real Adversary in mind. The religion can quite possibly be a satanic counterfeit aimed at deceiving people into thinking that they are truly opposing God's spiritual enemy by following it. And this is precisely the position that Muslims are in since they erroneously assume that the figure that the Quran calls Satan is actually the Devil. In reality, the Satan of Islam is not the same one mentioned in the Holy Bible - just as the Jesus of Islam is not the real Jesus of history, the Christ of faith. Besides, if this Muslim claim is correct then this means any religion which warns against Satan must also be true and could not originate from the Devil. Therefore, Mormonism, Bahaiism, Ahmadiyyism, etc. could not be satanic in origin since they all have negative things to say about the Adversary. Yet all these religions have conflicting views of God, Christ, Satan, man and the nature of salvation. Unless we assume that God inspires chaos and confusion it is evident that not all of these religions can be from the same divine source. They can all be false, but they can't all be true.

My Response: Sam does not realize that this argument could also be used against his religion. Anyone could come up and say MAYBE THIS AND MAYBE THAT, where is the OBJECTIVE proof?

Sam Shamoun said: As far as Paul is concerned, there is ample evidence supporting his conversion and encounter with the risen Lord. For instance, Jesus didn't simply appear to Paul but also to a disciple named Ananias whom he sent to baptize Paul: "As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.' The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, 'Ananias!' 'Yes, Lord,' he answered. The Lord told him, 'Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. IN A VISION HE HAS SEEN A MAN NAMED ANANIAS COME AND PLACE HIS HANDS ON HIM TO RESTORE HIS SIGHT.' 'Lord,' Ananias answered, 'I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.' But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.' Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord - Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here - has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God." Acts 9:3-20

The reason why Jesus appeared to Ananias should be obvious. By appearing and sending Ananias to Paul, Jesus was giving confirmation that what Saul had seen wasn't a deception or the figment of his overactive imagination. After all, individuals normally do not have the same dream or vision where they receive messages independently from one another so as to verify each others' experiences.

My Response:I was expecting a more solid reply from Sam. Couldn't the devil have simply deceived both Paul and Ananias? Your defense is weak and does not disprove the POSSIBILITY that it was the devil.

Sam Shamoun said:Furthermore, the other Apostles such as Peter confirmed Paul's Apostleship and gave him the right hand of fellowship:"And when he had come to Jerusalem he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists; but they were seeking to kill him." Acts 9:26-29 "For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cili'cia. And I was still not known by sight to the churches of Christ in Judea; they only heard it said, 'He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.' And they glorified God because of me." Galatians 1:11-24 "Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up by revelation; and I laid before them (but privately before those who were of repute) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain. But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. But because of false brethren secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage -- to them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. And from those who were reputed to be something (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) -- those, I say, who were of repute added nothing to me; but on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter for the mission to the circumcised worked through me also for the Gentiles), and when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised; only they would have us remember the poor, which very thing I was eager to do." Galatians 2:1-10 Peter even classified Paul's writings as Holy Scripture: "And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures." 2 Peter 3:15-16 Thus, if Paul was deceived into deceiving others, so were the rest of the disciples and eyewitnesses of Christ.

My Response:Sam is forgetting that there were other apostles who disagreed with Paul regarding major issues of doctrine...Galatians 1:6 ⁶I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel Galatians 3:1-3 ¹You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ²I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? ³Are you so foolish?

2 Corinthians 11:4-5 ⁴For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. ⁵But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." 2 Corinthians 11: 22-24 What anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. ²²Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. ²³Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

Lets also not forget the incident of Paul opposing Peter at Antioch...Galatians 2:11-21 Paul Opposes Peter ¹¹When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ¹²Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. (why did people such as the Apostle James still believe that the law regarding food should still be applied? If Jesus came to replace the law, then why are they still following the law?) ¹³The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. (so, Peter, James and Barnabas are wrong?) ¹⁴When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?" ¹⁵"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' ¹⁶know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. (why are they arguing over following the law or not? Why are they not in agreement of doctrine?) ¹⁷"If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! ¹⁸If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. ¹⁹For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"^[d] Paul condemns all Jewish Christians including Peter and Barnabas. We only have Paul's side of the story but Peter's recollection of this story is not given to us in the New Testament. Peter truly would have known Jesus better than Paul. There is dispute whether 1 Peter is a letter written by Peter and almost all scholars, ancient and modern agree that 2 Peter is not a letter written by Peter. Sam may argue and quote his scholars to prove that 2 Peter is written by Peter, however there are still many major Christian scholars who don't think that 2 Peter was written by Peter so at the end of the day we are not going to be 100% sure and therefore cannot use 2 Peter as evidence to prove that he agreed with Paul.

Acts 4:31 ³¹After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.If Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit then why is Paul calling Peter a hypocrite for eating with the Gentiles and then when people came from James he got up. James is Jesus' half brother, he lived and stayed with Jesus. Why did he still think that people have to eat kosher meat? We don't have any account of Peter's story regarding this incident. Barnabas is also called a hypocrite in verse 13. Look how in verses 15 through 17 Paul is arguing with them about the law. That means the disciples wanted to follow the law and suggested following it. Otherwise Paul wouldn't have mentioned it. How could he say those things to Peter and look what Jesus said about Peter

Sam Shamoun said: Finally, what makes Zawadi's argument regarding Paul not knowing Jesus well enough to identify him truly amazing is just how inconsistent this position is. After all, Muhammad was born roughly five hundred and seventy years after the birth of Christ and could not have seen or known Jesus enough to identify him either. Yet this still doesn't prevent Zawadi from believing that Muhammad could give a description of Christ as reported in the hadith literature: Narrated Ibn Umar:The Prophet

said, "I saw Moses, Jesus and Abraham (on the night of my Ascension to the heavens). Jesus was of red complexion, curly hair and a broad chest. Moses was of brown complexion, straight hair and tall stature as if he was from the people of Az-Zutt." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 4, Book 55, Number 648)

Narrated Salim from his father:

No, By Allah, the Prophet did not tell that Jesus was of red complexion but said, "While I was asleep circumambulating the Ka'ba (in my dream), suddenly I saw a man of brown complexion and lank hair walking between two men, and water was dropping from his head. I asked, 'Who is this?' The people said, 'He is the son of Mary.' Then I looked behind and I saw a red-complexioned, fat, curly-haired man, blind in the right eye which looked like a bulging out grape. I asked, 'Who is this?' They replied, 'He is Ad-Dajjal.' The one who resembled to him among the people, was Ibn Qatar." (Az-Zuhri said, "He (i.e. Ibn Qatan) was a man from the tribe Khuza'a who died in the pre-Islamic period.") (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 4, Book 55, Number 650) The reason? Because Zawadi erroneously assumes that what Muhammad saw was a vision from God. Yet the problem with believing that Muhammad saw Jesus in a vision is that, unlike the blessed Paul, he had none of the eyewitnesses of Christ to confirm his experience. In fact, Muhammad contradicts the writings of those who had seen Christ or had seen the eyewitnesses of Jesus, proving that he was not receiving genuine revelation from the true God.

My Response:The reason why I said that was only to show your logic of using circumstantial evidence to prove something. So Paul and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) both did not physically see Jesus during Jesus ministry on earth. But they both claimed to have seen him, so who is right? Sam tilts the favor a bit more onto Paul's side because Paul could have verified with the apostles. However, its possible that Satan could have appeared as someone who looked like Jesus and not exactly Jesus and thus Paul saying the description would match that of Jesus. So there is really no favor on either side. It all just comes down to whose religion is the truth or not.

Sam Shamoun said:Moreover, the problem is not with Muhammad getting scared. Rather, the problem is with the reason why Muhammad got scared, i.e. the spirit physically tortured him in their first encounter

My Response:Gabriel did not torture the Prophet he just pressed him hard. How is that torturing? Now as for the rest of the paper Sam Shamoun's basic argument is that because the Prophets of the Old Testament did not have the same experiences when receiving revelation such as Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) then this necessarily implies that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is not a true Prophet. There are some problems with this assertion...First, Shamoun assumes that his Bible is the true authentic word of God and is using it as a criteria to judge Prophet Muhammad. This is something that he still needs to prove and not just assert. Secondly, Shamoun is arguing from silence. He thinks that just because his Bible does not mention these experiences then that necessarily implies that they didn't happen. Shamoun recently had a debate with Sami Zaatri on the topic, "Is Jesus God", which can be downloaded [here](#). Sam Shamoun says in the 20th minute 10th second...*Your arguing from silence, right, and absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Now let me repeat that again. Now just because the documents do not say that he said "x" does not mean that he didn't say "x"*. So notice, Shamoun is committing the same fallacy he accused Sami Zaatri of doing. There are many Prophets in the Old Testament that we do not know full and complete details about. Therefore, it would not be fair to say with conviction that they did not have the same experiences. Thirdly, Sam quotes from the book of Daniel and gospel of Luke to show Prophet's experiences with Gabriel. But Sam forgot an important point. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) saw Gabriel in his true original form while receiving the revelation. He saw him up close and personal and had physical contact with him. Daniel saw Gabriel while Gabriel took the form of a man..."While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill-- while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, 'Daniel, I have

now come to give you insight and understanding.” Daniel 9:20-22 However, this man did have extraordinary features...Daniel 10:5-6 I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. If we continue reading on you will see that Daniel was actually terrified...

Daniel 10:7-15 ⁷ I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. ⁹ Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. ¹⁰ A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. ¹² Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

¹⁵ While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. ¹⁶ Then one who looked like a man ^[b] touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak." ¹⁷ How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe." So here we see that Daniel got terrified from his vision just like Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him did. We also see in verse 15 that Daniel had problems breathing. I believe that 'gasping for air' was one of the criteria that Shamoun put forth for someone being possessed by a demon while receiving revelation. So does Daniel fit the criteria as well? Or is Sam Shamoun being a hypocrite and only applying it to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)?

CONCLUSION

Sam Shamoun has not provided me with any objective without a shadow of a doubt evidence to convince me that Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him was possessed. It is all weak circumstantial evidence that could actually be used against the Prophets of the Old Testament. Shamoun uses the criteria of the pagan Arabs at the time and his Bible to judge Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him without even first showing us why such a criteria is the correct standard to use for judgment. Sam Shamoun has no case.

Final Conclusion of all books:(by Mr.Faisal Fahim)

There is no God but Allah & Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad were all messengers & prophets of 1 God. The Quran is the final testament book of God's words only. The Quran proves God exists .Jesus was born without a father. There is no doubt in the evidences of history that Muhammad & Jesus existed & they were prophets of 1 true God Allah.

21. Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, verily, thou wouldst have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of Allah. Such are the similitudes which We propound to men, that they may reflect. 22. Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. 23 .Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- the

Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. 24 .He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colours). To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names: whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare His Praises and Glory: and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. {Al-Hashr- Al Quran}

1. Praise be to Allah, to Whom belong all things in the heavens and on earth: to Him be Praise in the Hereafter: and He is Full of Wisdom, acquainted with all things. 2. He knows all that goes into the earth, and all that comes out thereof; all that comes down from the sky and all that ascends thereto and He is the Most Merciful, the Oft-Forgiving. 3 .The Unbelievers say, "Never to us will come the Hour": Say, "Nay! but most surely, by my Lord, it will come upon you;- by Him Who knows the unseen,- from Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the heavens or on earth: Nor is there anything less than that, or greater, but is in the Record Perspicuous: 4 .That He may reward those who believe and work deeds of righteousness: for such is Forgiveness and a Sustenance Most Generous." 5 .But those who strive against Our Signs, to frustrate them,- for such will be a Penalty,- a Punishment most humiliating. 6 .And those to whom knowledge has come see that the (Revelation) sent down to thee from thy Lord - that is the Truth, and that it guides to the Path of the Exalted (in might), Worthy of all praise. (Saba 34 Al-Quran)

Surah 3. The Family Of 'Imran, The House Of 'Imran(Quran)

1. A. L. M. 2. Allah. There is no god but He,-the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal.**3.** It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong). **4.** Then those who reject Faith in the Signs of Allah will suffer the severest penalty, and Allah is Exalted in Might, Lord of Retribution.**5.** From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens.**6.** He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases. There is no god but He, the Exalted in Might, the Wise. **7.** He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: In it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord:" and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding.**8.** "Our Lord!" (they say), "Let not our hearts deviate now after Thou hast guided us, but grant us mercy from Thine own Presence; for Thou art the Grantor of bounties without measure.**9.** "Our Lord! Thou art He that will gather mankind Together against a day about which there is no doubt; for Allah never fails in His promise."**10.** Those who reject Faith,- neither their possessions nor their (numerous) progeny will avail them aught against Allah. They are themselves but fuel for the Fire. {Surah Baqarah Quran} **284.** To Allah belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth. Whether ye show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah Calleth you to account for it. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and punisheth whom He pleaseth, for Allah hath power over all things.**285.** The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles.

"We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His apostles." And they say: "We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness, our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys."**286.** On no soul doth Allah Place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray:) "Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden Like that which Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; Help us against those who stand against faith."

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